# LIFE

OF

# NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE.

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THE

# LIFE

OF

# NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE,

## EMPEROR OF THE FRENCH

WITH A

## Preliminary View of the French Revolution.

BY SIR WALTER SCOTT.

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————————Sed non in Cæsare tantum
Nomen erat, nec fama ducis; sed nescia virtus
Stare loco, solusque pudor non vincere bello.
*Acer et indomitus*, quo spes, quoque ira vocasset,
*Ferre manum, et nunquam temerando parcere ferro*:
Successus urgere suos, instare favori
Numinis, impellens quidquid sibi summa petenti
Obstaret, gaudensque viam fecisse ruina.

LUCANI *Pharsalia*, Lib. I.

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THE King had, since the insurrection of the 20th of June, which displayed how much he

was at the mercy of his enemies, renounced almost all thoughts of safety or escape. Henry IV. would have called for his arms—Louis XVI. demanded his confessor. « I have no longer any thing to do with earth,» he said. « I must turn all my thoughts on Heaven.» [illegible] vain efforts were made to bribe the leaders of the Jacobins, who took the money [illegible] pursued, as might have been expected, their own course with equal rigour. The motion for the declaration of the King's forfeiture still lingered in the Convention, its fate depending upon the coming crisis. At length the fatal 10th of August approached, being the day which, after repeated adjournments, had been fixed by the Girondists and their rivals for the final rising.

The King was apprised of their intention, and had hastily recalled from their barracks at Courbevoie about a thousand Swiss guards, upon whose fidelity he could depend. The formidable discipline and steady demeanour of these gallant mountaineers might have recalled the description given by historians, of the entrance of their predecessors into Paris under similar circumstances, the day before the affair of the Barricades, in the reign of Henry II.[1]

[1] Thus imitated by the dramatist Lee, from the historian Davila:

> Have you not heard— the King, preventing day,
> Received the guards within the city gates;
> The jolly Swisses marching to their pipes,

But the present moment was too anxious to admit of reflections upon past history.

Early on the morning of the 10th of August, the tocsin rung out its alarm peal over the terrified city of Paris, and announced that the long-menaced insurrection was at length on foot. In many parishes the Constitutional party resisted those who came to sound this awful signal; but the well-prepared Jacobins were found every where victorious, and the prolonged mournful sound was soon tolled out from every steeple in the metropolis.

To this melancholy music the contending parties arranged their forces for attack and defence, upon a day which was doomed to be decisive.

The Swiss guards got under arms, and repaired to their posts in and around the palace. About four hundred grenadiers of the loyal section of Filles Saint Thomas, joined by several from that of Les Petits-Pères, in whom all confidence could justly be reposed, were posted in the interior of the palace, and associated with the Swiss for its defence. The relics of the Royalist party, undismayed at the events of the 28th of February in the year preceding,[1]

The crowd stood gaping heedless and amazed,
Shrunk to their shops, and left the passage free.

[1] When they were in similar circumstances maltreated by the National Guard. See vol. I. page 252.

had repaired to the palace on the first signal given by the tocsin. Joined to the domestic attendants of the royal family, they might amount to about four hundred persons. Nothing can more strongly mark the unprepared state of the court, than that there were neither muskets nor bayonets for suitably arming these volunteers, nor any supply of ammunition, save what the Swiss and national grenadiers had in their pouches. The appearance also of this little troop tended to inspire dismay rather than confidence. The chivalrous cry of «Entrance for the Noblesse of France,» was the signal for their filing into the presence of the royal family. Alas! instead of the thousand nobles whose swords used to gleam around their monarch at such a crisis, there entered but veteran officers of rank, whose strength, though not their spirit, was consumed by years, mixed with boys scarce beyond the age of children, and with men of civil professions, several of whom, Lamoignon Malesherbes for example, had now for the first time worn a sword. Their arms were as miscellaneous as their appearance. Rapiers, hangers, and pistols, were the weapons with which they were to encounter bands well provided with musketry and artillery. Their courage, however, was unabated. It was in vain that the Queen conjured, almost with tears, men aged fourscore and upwards, to retire from a contest

where their strength could avail so little. The veterans felt that the fatal hour was come, and, unable to fight, claimed the privilege of dying in the discharge of their duty.

The behaviour of Marie Antoinette was magnanimous in the highest degree. «Her majestic air,» says Peltier, «her Austrian lip, and aquiline nose, gave her an air of dignity, which can only be conceived by those who beheld her in that trying hour.» Could she have inspired the King with some portion of her active spirit, he might even at that extreme hour have wrested the victory from the Revolutionists; but the misfortunes which he could endure like a saint, he could not face and combat like a hero; and his scruples about shedding human blood well nigh unmanned him.

The distant shouts of the enemy were already heard, while the Gardens of the Tuileries were filled by the successive legions of the National Guard, with their cannon. Of this civic force, some, and especially the artillerymen, were as ill-disposed towards the King as was possible; others were well inclined to him; and the greater part remained doubtful. Mandat, their commander, was entirely in the royal interests. He had disposed the force he commanded to the best advantage for discouraging the mutinous, and giving confidence to the well-disposed, when he received

an order to repair to the municipality for orders. He went thither accordingly, expecting the support of such Constitutionalists as remained in that magistracy, but he found it entirely in possession of the Jacobin party. Mandat was arrested, and ordered a prisoner to the Abbaye, which he never reached, being pistoled by an assassin at the gate of the Hôtel de Ville. His death was an infinite loss to the King's party.

A signal advantage had at the same time been suffered to escape. Pétion, the Brissotin Mayor of Paris, was now observed among the National Guards. The Royalists possessed themselves of his person, and brought him to the palace, where it was proposed to detain this popular magistrate as an hostage. Upon this, his friends in the Assembly moved that he should be brought to the bar, to render an account of the state of the capital; a message was dispatched accordingly requiring his attendance, and Louis had the weakness to permit him to depart.

The motions of the assailants were far from being so prompt and lively as upon former occasions, when no great resistance was anticipated. Santerre, an eminent brewer, who, from his great capital, and his affectation of popular zeal, had raised himself to the command of the suburb forces, was equally inactive in mind and body, and by no means fitted for

the desperate part which he was called on to play. Westerman, a zealous Republican, and a soldier of skill and courage, came to press Santerre's march, informing him that the Marseillois and Breton Federates were in arms in the Place du Carrousel, and expected the advance of the pikemen from the suburbs of Saint Antoine and St Marceau. On Santerre's hesitating, Westerman placed his sword-point at his throat, and the citizen commandant, yielding to the nearer terror, put his bands at length in motion. Their numbers were immense. But the real strength of the assault was to lie on the Federates of Marseilles and Bretag e, and other provinces, who had been carefully provided with arms and ammunition. They were also secure of the Gendarmes, or soldiers of police, although these were called out and arranged on the King's side. The Marseillois and Bretons were placed at the head of the long columns of the suburb pikemen, as the edge of an axe is armed with steel, while the back is of coarser metal to give weight to the blow. The charge of the attack was committed to Westerman.

In the mean time, the defenders of the palace advised Louis to undertake a review of the troops assembled for his defence. His appearance and mien were deeply dejected, and he wore, instead of an uniform, a suit of violet, which is the mourning colour of sovereigns.

His words were broken and interrupted, like the accents of a man in despair, and void of the energy suitable to the occasion. «I know not,» he said, «what they would have from me —I am willing to die with my faithful servants —Yes, gentlemen, we will at length do our best to resist.» It was in vain that the Queen laboured to inspire her husband with a tone more resolved — in vain that she even snatched a pistol from the belt of the Comte d'Affray, and thrust it into the King's hand, saying, «Now is the moment to show yourself as you are.» Indeed, Barbaroux, whose testimony can scarce be doubted, declares his firm opinion, that had the King at this time mounted his horse, and placed himself at the head of the National Guards, they would have followed him, and succeeded in putting down the Revolution. History has its strong parallels, and one would think we are writing of Margaret of Anjou, endeavouring in vain to inspire determination into her virtuous but feeble-minded husband.

Within the palace, the disposition of the troops seemed excellent, and there, as well as in the courts of the Tuileries, the King's address was answered with shouts of « *Vive le Roi!* » But when he sallied out into the garden, his reception from the legions of the National Guard was at least equivocal, and that of the artillerymen, and of a battalion from Saint

Marçeau, was decidedly unfavourable. Some cried, « *Vive la Nation!* » Some, « Down with the Tyrant! » The King did nothing to encourage his own adherents, or to crush his enemies, but retired to hold counsel in the palace, around which the storm was fast gathering.

It might have been expected that the Assembly, in which the Constitutionalists possessed so strong a majority as to throw out the accusation against La Fayette by a triumphant vote, might now, in the hour of dread necessity, have made some effort to save the crown which that Constitution recognized, and the innocent life of the prince by whom it was occupied. But fear had laid strong possession upon these unworthy and ungenerous representatives. The ministers of the King appeared at the bar, and represented the state of the city and of the palace, conjuring the Assembly to send a deputation to prevent bloodshed. This was courageous on the part of those faithful servants; for to intimate the least interest in the King's fate, was like the bold swimmer who approaches the whirlpool caused by the sinking of a gallant vessel. The measure they proposed had been resorted to on the 20th June preceding, and was then successful, even though the deputation consisted of members the most unfriendly to the King. But now,

the Assembly passed to the order of the day, and thereby left the fate of the King and capital to chance, or the result of battle.

In the mean time, the palace was completely invested. The bridge adjacent to the Tuileries, called Pont-Royal, was occupied by the insurgents, and the Quai on the opposite side of the river was mounted with cannon, of which the assailants had about fifty pieces, served by the most determined Jacobins; for the artillerymen had from the beginning embraced the popular cause with unusual energy.

At this decisive moment Rœderer, the Procureur-général Syndic, the depositary and organ of the law, who had already commanded the Swiss and armed Royalists not to make any offensive movement, but to defend themselves when attacked, began to think, apparently, that his own safety was compromised, by this implied grant of permission to use arms even in defence of the King's person. He became urgent with the King to retire from the palace, and put himself under the protection of the National Assembly. The Queen felt at once all the imbecility and dishonour of throwing themselves as suppliants on the protection of a body, which had not shown even a shadow of interest in their safety, surrounded as they knew the royal family to be with the most inveterate enemies. Ere she consented to such

infamy, she said, she would willingly be nailed to the walls of the palace. But the counsel which promised to avert the necessity of bloodshed on either part, suited well with the timorous conscience and irresolution of Louis. Other measures were hastily proposed by those who had devoted themselves to secure his safety. There was, however, no real alternative but to fight at the head of his guards, or to submit himself to the pleasure of the Assembly, and Louis preferred the latter.

His wife, his sister, and his children, accompanied him on this occasion; and the utmost efforts of an escort of three hundred Swiss and national grenadiers were scarce able to protect them, and a small retinue, consisting of the ministers and a few men of rank, the gleanings of the most brilliant court of Christendom, who accompanied their master in this last act of humiliation, which was, indeed, equal to a voluntary descent from his throne. They were, at every moment of their progress, interrupted by the deadliest threats and imprecations, and the weapons of more than one ruffian were levelled against them. The Queen was robbed even of her watch and purse—so near might the worst criminals approach the persons of the royal fugitives. Louis showed the greatest composure amidst all these imminent dangers. He was feeble when

called upon to kill, but strong in resolution when the question was only to die.

The King's entrance into the Assembly was not without dignity. «My family and I are come among you,» he said, «to prevent the commission of a great crime.» Vergniaud, who was president at the time, answered with propriety, though ambiguously. He assured the King that the Assembly knew its duties, and was ready to perish in support of them. A member of the Mountain observed, with bitter irony, that it was impossible for the Assembly to deliberate freely in presence of the monarch, and proposed he should retreat into one of the most remote committee-rooms—a place where assassination must have been comparatively easy. The Assembly rejected this proposal, alike insulting and insidious, and assigned a box, or small apartment, called the Logographe's, used for the reporters of the debates, for the place of refuge of this unhappy family. This arrangement was scarce made, ere a heavy discharge of musketry and cannon announced that the King's retreat had not prevented the bloodshed he so greatly feared.

It must be supposed to have been Louis's intention that his guards and defenders should draw off from the palace, so soon as he himself had abandoned it; for to what purpose

was it now to be defended, when the royal family were no longer concerned? and at what risk, when the garrison was diminished by three hundred of the best of the troops, selected as the royal escort? But no such order of retreat, or of non-resistance, had, in fact, been issued to the Swiss guards, and the military discipline of this fine corps prevented their retiring from an assigned post without command. Captain Duler is said to have asked the Mareschal de Mailly for orders, and to have received for answer, «Do not suffer your posts to be forced.»—«You may rely on it,» replied the intrepid Swiss.

Meantime, to give no unnecessary provocation, as well as on account of their diminished numbers, the court in front of the palace was abandoned, and the guards were withdrawn into the building itself; their outermost sentinels being placed at the bottom of the splendid staircase, to defend a sort of barricade which had been erected there, ever since the 20th June, to prevent such intrusions as distinguished that day.

The insurgents, with the Marseillois and Breton Federates at their heads, poured into the court-yard without opposition, planted their cannon where some small building gave them advantage, and advanced without hesitation to the outposts of the Swiss. They had

already tasted blood that day, having massacred a patrol of royalists, who, unable to get into the Tuileries, had attempted to assist the defence, by interrupting, or at least watching and discovering, the measures adopted by the insurgents. These men's heads were, as usual, borne on pikes among their ranks.

They pushed forward, and it is said the Swiss at first offered demonstrations of truce. But the assailants thronged onward, crowded on the barricade, and when the parties came into such close collision, a struggle ensued, and a shot was fired. It is doubtful from what side it came, nor is it of much consequence, for on such an occasion that body must be held the aggressors who approach the pickets of the other, armed and prepared for assault; and although the first gun be fired by those whose position is endangered, it is no less defensive than if discharged in reply to a fire from the other side.

This unhappy shot seems to have dispelled some small chance of a reconciliation between the parties. Hard firing instantly commenced from the Federates and Marseillois, whilst the palace blazed forth fire from every window, and killed a great many of the assailants. The Swiss, whose numbers were now only about seven hundred men, determined, notwithstanding, upon a sally, which, in the beginning, was completely successful. They drove the

insurgents from the court-yard, killed many of the Marseillois and Bretons, took some of their guns, and, turning them along the streets, compelled the assailants to actual flight, so that word was carried to the National Assembly that the Swiss were victorious. The utmost confusion prevailed there; the deputies upbraided each other with their share in bringing about the insurrection; Brissot showed timidity; and several of the deputies, thinking the Guards were hastening to massacre them, attempted to escape by the windows of the Hall.

If, indeed, the sally of the Swiss had been supported by a sufficient body of faithful cavalry, the Revolution might have been that day ended. But the Gendarmes, the only horsemen in the field, were devoted to the popular cause, and the Swiss, too few to secure their advantage, were obliged to return to the palace, where they were of new invested.

Westerman posted his forces and artillery with much intelligence, and continued a fire on the Tuileries from all points. It was now returned with less vivacity, for the ammunition of the defenders began to fail. At this moment D'Hervilly arrived from the Assembly, with the King's commands that the Swiss should cease firing, evacuate the palace, and repair to the King's person. The faithful Guards obeyed at once, not understanding that the object was submission, but conceiving they

were summoned elsewhere, to fight under the King's eye. They had no sooner collected themselves into a body, and attempted to cross the Garden of the Tuileries, than, exposed to a destructive fire on all sides, the remains of that noble regiment, so faithful to the trust assigned to it, diminished at every step; until, charged repeatedly by the treacherous Gendarmes, who ought to have supported them, they were separated into platoons, which continued to defend themselves with courage, even till the very last of them was overpowered, dispersed, and destroyed by multitudes. A better defence against such fearful odds scarce remains on historical record—a more useless one can hardly be imagined.

The rabble, with their leaders, the Federates, now burst into the palace, executing the most barbarous vengeance on the few defenders who had not made their escape; and while some massacred the living, others, and especially the unsexed women who were mingled in their ranks, committed the most shameful butchery on the corpses of the slain.

Almost every species of enormity was perpetrated upon that occasion excepting pillage, which the populace would not permit, even amid every other atrocity. There exist in the coarsest minds, nay, while such are engaged in most abominable wickedness, redeeming traits of character, which show that the image

of the Deity is seldom totally and entirely defaced even in the rudest bosoms. An ordinary workman of the suburbs, in a dress which implied abject poverty, made his way into the place where the royal family were seated, demanding the King by the name of Monsieur Veto. « So you are here, » he said, « beast of a Veto! There is a purse of gold I found in your house yonder. If you had found mine, you would not have been so hones » There were, doubtless, amongst that dreadful assemblage many thousands, whose natural honesty would have made them despise pillage, although the misrepresentations by which they were influenced to fury easily led them to rebellion and murder.

Band after band of these fierce men, their faces blackened with powder, their hands and weapons streaming with blood, came to invoke the vengeance of the Assembly on the head of the King and royal family, and expressed, in the very presence of the victims whom they claimed, their expectations and commands how they should be dealt with.

Vergniaud, who, rather than Brissot, ought to have given name to the Girondists, took the lead in gratifying the wishes of these dreadful petitioners. He moved, 1st, That a National Convention should be summoned. 2d, That the King should be suspended from his office. 3d, That the King should reside at the Luxem-

bourg palace under safeguard of the law,—a word which they were not ashamed to use. These proposals were unanimously assented to.

An almost vain attempt was made to save the lives of that remaining detachment of Swiss which had formed the King's escort to the Assembly, and to whom several of the scattered Royalists had again united themselves. Their officers proposed, as a last effort of despair, to make themselves masters of the Assembly, and declare the deputies hostages for the King's safety. Considering the smallness of their numbers, such an attempt could only have produced additional bloodshed, which would have been ascribed doubtless to the King's treachery. The King commanded them to resign their arms, being the last order which he issued to any military force. He was obeyed; but, as they were instantly attacked by the insurgents, few escaped slaughter, and submission preserved but a handful. About seven hundred and fifty fell in the defence, and after the storm of the Tuileries. Some few were saved by the generous exertions of individual deputies—others were sent to prison, where a bloody end awaited them—the greater part were butchered by the rabble, so soon as they saw them without arms. The mob sought for them the whole night, and massacred many porters of private families, who, at Paris, are

generally termed Swiss, though often natives of other countries.

The royal family were at length permitted to spend the night, which, it may be presumed, was sleepless, in the cells of the neighbouring convent of the Feuillans.

Thus ended, for the period of twenty years and upwards, the reign of the Bourbons over their ancient realm of France.

## CHAPTER II.

La Fayette compelled to Escape from France—Is made Prisoner by the Prussians, with three Companions.—Reflections.—The Triumvirate, Danton, Robespierre, and Marat.—Revolutionary Tribunal appointed.—Stupor of the Legislative Assembly.—Longwy, Stenay, and Verdun, taken by the Prussians—Mob of Paris enraged.—Great Massacre of Prisoners in Paris, commencing on the 2d, and ending 6th September.—Apathy of the Assembly during and after these Events—Review of its Causes.

THE success of the 10th of August had sufficiently established the democratic maxim, that the will of the people, expressed by their insurrections, was the supreme law; the orators of the clubs its interpreters; and the pikes of the suburbs its executive power. The lives of individuals and their fortunes were from that time only to be regarded as leases at will, subject to be revoked so soon as an artful, envious, or grasping demagogue should be able to turn against the lawful owners the readily-excited suspicions of a giddy multitude, whom habit and impunity had rendered ferocious.

The system established on these principles, and termed liberty, was in fact an absolute despotism, far worse than that of Algiers; because the tyrannic Dey only executes his oppression and cruelties within a certain sphere, affecting a limited number of his subjects who approach near to his throne; while, of the many thousand leaders of the Jacobins of France, every one had his peculiar circle in which he claimed right, as full as that of Robespierre or Marat, to avenge former slights or injuries, and to gratify his own individual appetite for plunder and blood.

All the departments of France, without exception, paid the most unreserved submission to the decrees of the Assembly, or rather to those which the Community of Paris, and the insurgents, had dictated to that legislative body; so that the hour seemed arrived when the magistracy of Paris, supported by a democratic force, should, in the name and through the influence of the Assembly, impose its own laws upon France.

La Fayette in vain endeavoured to animate his soldiers against this new species of despotism. The Jacobins had their friends and representatives in the very trustiest of his battalions. He made an effort, however, and a bold one. He seized on the persons of three deputies, sent to him as commissioners by the Assembly, to compel submission to their de-

crees, and proposed to reserve them as hostages for the King's safety. Several of his own general officers, the intrepid Desaix amongst others, seemed willing to support him. Dumourier, however, the personal enemy of La Fayette, and ambitious of being his successor in the supreme command, recognized the decrees of the Assembly in the separate army which he commanded. His example drew over Luckner, who also commanded an independent corps d'armée, and who at first seemed disposed to join with La Fayette.

That unfortunate general was at length left unsupported by any considerable part even of his own army; so that with three friends, whose names were well known in the revolution, he was fain to attempt an escape from France, and, in crossing a part of the enemy's frontier, they were made prisoners by a party of Prussians.

Fugitives from their own camp for the sake of royalty, they might have expected refuge in that of the allied kings, who were in arms for the same object; but, with a littleness of spirit which augured no good for their cause, the allies determined that these unfortunate gentlemen should be consigned as state prisoners to different fortresses. This conduct on the part of the monarchs, however irritated they might be by the recollection of some part of La Fayette's conduct in the outset of the Re-

volution, was neither to be vindicated by morality, the law of nations, nor the rules of sound policy. We are no approvers of the democratic species of monarchy which La Fayette endeavoured to establish, and cannot but be of opinion, that if he had acted upon his victory in the Champ de Mars, he might have shut up the Jacobin Club, and saved his own power and popularity from being juggled out of his hands by those sanguinary charlatans. But errors of judgment must be pardoned to men placed amidst unheard-of difficulties; and La Fayette's conduct on his visit to Paris bore testimony to his real willingness to save the King and preserve the monarchy. But even if he had been amenable for a crime against his own country, we know not what right Austria or Prussia had to take cognizance of it. To them he was a mere prisoner of war, and nothing farther. Lastly, it is very seldom that a petty and vindictive line of policy can consist with the real interest, either of great princes or of private individuals. In the present case, the arrest of La Fayette was peculiarly the contrary. It afforded a plain proof to France and to all Europe, that the allied monarchs were determined to regard as enemies all who had in any manner, or to any extent, favoured the Revolution, being indeed the whole people of France, excepting the emigrants now in arms. The effect must necessarily have been, to com-

pel every Frenchman, who was desirous of enjoying more liberty than the ancient despotism permitted, into submission to the existing government, whatever it was, so long as invading armies of foreigners, whose schemes were apparently as inconsistent with the welfare as with the independence of the country, were hanging on the frontiers of France.

For a short space, like hounds over the carcase of the prey they have jointly run down, the Girondists and Jacobins suspended their dissensions; but when the Constitutional party had ceased to show all signs of existence, their brawl soon recommenced, and the Girondists early discovered, that in the allies whom they had called on to assist them in the subjugation of royalty, they had already to strive with men, who, though inferior to them in speculative knowledge, and in the eloquence which was to sway the Assembly, possessed in a much higher degree the practical energies by which revolutions are accomplished, were in complete possession of the community (or magistracy) of Paris, and maintained despotic authority over all the bands of the metropolis. Three men of terror, whose names will long remain, we trust, unmatched in history by those of any similar miscreants, had now the unrivalled leading of the Jacobins, and were called the Triumvirate.

Danton deserves to be named first, as un-

rivalled by his colleagues in talent and audacity. He was a man of gigantic size, and possessed a voice of thunder. His countenance was that of an Ogre on the shoulders of a Hercules. He was as fond of the pleasures of vice as of the practice of cruelty; and it was said there were times when he became humanized amidst his debauchery, laughed at the terror which his furious declamations excited, and might be approached with safety, like the Maelstrom at the turn of tide. His profusion was indulged to an extent hazardous to his popularity for the populace are jealous of a lavish expenditure, as raising their favourites too much above their own degree; and the charge of peculation finds always ready credit with them, when brought against public men.

Robespierre possessed this advantage over Danton, that he did not seem to seek for wealth, either for hoarding or expending, but lived in strict and economical retirement, to justify the name of the Incorruptible, with which he was honoured by his partisans. He appears to have possessed little talent, saving a deep fund of hypocrisy, considerable powers of sophistry, and a cold exaggerated strain of oratory, as foreign to good taste, as the measures he recommended were to ordinary humanity. It seemed wonderful, that even the seething and boiling of the revolutionary cauldron should have sent up from the bottom and

long supported on the surface, a thing so miserably void of claims to public distinction; but Robespierre had to impose on the minds of the vulgar, and he knew how to beguile them, by accommodating his flattery to their passions and scale of understanding, and by acts of cunning and hypocrisy, which weigh more with the multitude than the words of eloquence, or the arguments of wisdom. The people listened as to their Cicero, when he twanged out his apostrophes of *Pauvre Peuple*, *Peuple vertueux!* and hastened to execute whatever came recommended by such honied phrases, though devised by the worst of men for the worst and most inhuman of purposes.

Vanity was Robespierre's ruling passion, and though his countenance was the image of his mind, he was vain even of his personal appearance, and never adopted the external habits of a sans culotte. Amongst his fellow Jacobins, he was distinguished by the nicety with which his hair was arranged and powdered; and the neatness of his dress was carefully attended to, so as to counterbalance, if possible, the vulgarity of his person. His apartments, though small, were elegant, and vanity had filled them with representations of the occupant. Robespierre's picture at length hung in one place, his miniature in another, his bust occupied a niche, and on the table were disposed a few medallions exhibiting his head

in profile. The vanity which all this indicated was of the coldest and most selfish character, being such as considers neglect as insult, and receives homage merely as a tribute; so that, while praise is received without gratitude, it is withheld at the risk of mortal hate. Self-love of this dangerous character is closely allied with envy, and Robespierre was one of the most envious and vindictive men that ever lived. He never was known to pardon any opposition, affront, or even rivalry; and to be marked in his tablets on such an account was a sure, though perhaps not an immediate, sentence of death. Danton was a hero, compared with this cold, calculating, creeping miscreant; for his passions, though exaggerated, had at least some touch of humanity, and his brutal ferocity was supported by brutal courage. Robespierre was a coward, who signed death-warrants with a hand that shook, though his heart was relentless. He possessed no passions on which to charge his crimes: they were perpetrated in cold blood, and upon mature deliberation.

Marat, the third of this infernal triumvirate, had attracted the attention of the lower orders, by the violence of his sentiments in the journal which he conducted from the commencement of the Revolution, upon such principles that it took the lead in forwarding its cessive changes. His political exhortations

began and ended like the howl of a bloodhound for murder; or, if a wolf could have written a journal, the gaunt and famished wretch could not have ravened more eagerly for slaughter. It was blood which was Marat's constant demand, not in drops from the breast of an individual, not in puny streams from the slaughter of families, but blood in the profusion of an ocean. His usual calculation of the heads which he demanded amounted to two hundred and sixty thousand; and though he sometimes raised it as high as three hundred thousand, it never fell beneath the smaller number. It may be hoped, and, for the honour of human nature, we are inclined to believe, there was a touch of insanity in this unnatural strain of ferocity; and the wild and squalid features of the wretch appear to have intimated a degree of alienation of mind. Marat was, like Robespierre, a coward. Repeatedly denounced in the Assembly, he skulked instead of defending himself, and lay concealed in some obscure garret or cellar among his cut-throats, until a storm appeared, when, like a bird of ill omen, his death-screech was again heard. Such was the strange and fatal triumvirate, in which the same degree of cannibal cruelty existed under different aspects. Danton murdered to glut his rage; Robespierre, to avenge his injured vanity, or to remove a rival whom he envied; Marat, from the same instinctive

love of blood, which induces a wolf to continue his ravage of the flocks long after his hunger is appeased.

These three men were in complete possession of the Community of Paris, which was filled with their adherents exclusively, and which, now in command of the armed force that had achieved the victory of the 10th of August, held the Assembly as absolutely under their control, as the Assembly, prior to that period, had held the person of the King. It is true, Pétion was still Mayor of Paris; but, being considered as a follower of Roland and Brissot, he was regarded by the Jacobins as a prisoner, and detained in a sort of honourable restraint, having a body of their most faithful adherents constantly around him, as a guard which they pretended was assigned for his defence and protection. The truth is, that Pétion, a vain man, and of very moderate talents, had already lost his consequence. His temporary popularity arose almost solely out of the enmity entertained against him by the court, and his having braved on one or two occasions the King's personal displeasure, particularly on the 20th of June. This merit was now forgotten, and Pétion was fast sinking into his natural nullity. Nothing could be more pitiful than the appearance of this magistrate, whose name had been so lately the theme of every tongue in Paris, when brought

to the bar of the Assembly, pale, and hesitating to back, by his appearance among his terrible revolutionary associates, petitions for measures, as distasteful to himself as to his friends of the Gironde party, who had apparently no power to deliver him from his state of humiliating restraint.

The demands of the Community of Paris, now the Sanhedrim of the Jacobins, were of course for blood and vengeance, and revolutionary tribunals to make short and sharp execution upon constitutionalist and royalist, soldier and priest—upon all who acted on the principle, that the King had some right to defend his person and residence against a furious mob, armed with muskets and cannon—and upon all who could, by any possible implication, be charged with having approved such doctrines as leaned towards monarchy, at any time during all the changes of this changeful-featured Revolution.

A revolutionary tribunal was appointed accordingly; but the Girondists, to impose some check on its measures, rendered the judgment of a jury necessary for condemnation, an encumbrance which seemed to the Jacobins a needless and uncivic restriction of the rights of the people. Robespierre was to have been appointed President of this tribunal, but he declined the office on account of his philanthropic principles! Meantime, the sharpness

of its proceedings was sufficiently assured by the nomination of Danton to the office of Minister of Justice, which had fallen to his lot as a Jacobin, while Roland, Servan, and Clavière, alike fearing and detesting their dreadful colleague, assumed, with Monge and Lebrun, the other offices, in what was now called a Provisionary Executive. These last five ministers were Girondists.

It was not the serious intention of the Assembly to replace Louis in a palace, or to suffer him to retain the smallest portion of personal freedom or political influence. It had, indeed, been decreed on the night of the 10th of August, that he should inhabit the Luxembourg palace, but, on the 11th. his residence was transferred, with that of the royal family, to an ancient fortress called the Temple, from the Knights Templars, to whom it once belonged. There was in front a house, with some more modern apartments, but the dwelling of Louis was the donjon or ancient keep, itself a huge square tower of great antiquity, consisting of four stories. Each story contained two or three rooms or closets; but these apartments were unfurnished, and offered no convenience for the accommodation of an ordinary family, much less to prisoners of such distinction. The royal family were guarded with a strictness, of which every day increased the rigour.

In the mean while, the revolutionary tribu-

nal was proceeding against the friends and partisans of the deposed monarch with no lack, one would have thought, of zeal or animosity. De la Porte, intendant of the King's civil list, D'Angremont, and Durosoi, a royalist author, were with others condemned and executed. But Montmorin, the brother of the royal minister, was acquitted; and even the Comte d'Affray, though Colonel of the Swiss guards, found grace in the eyes of this tribunal;—so lenient it was in comparison to those which France was afterwards doomed to groan under. Danton, baulked of his prey, or but half-supplied with victims, might be compared to the spectre-huntsman of Boccaccio,—

> Stern look'd the fiend, as frustrate of his will,
> Not half sufficed, and greedy yet to kill.

But he had already devised within his soul, and agitated amongst his compeers, a scheme of vengeance so dark and dreadful, as never ruffian before or since had head to contrive, or nerve to execute. It was a measure of extermination which the Jacobins resolved upon —a measure so sweeping in its purpose and extent, that it should at once drown in their own blood every Royalist or Constitutionalist who could raise a finger, or even entertain a thought, against them.

Three things were indispensably essential

to their execrable plan. In the first place, they had to collect and place within reach of their assassins, the numerous victims whom they sought to overwhelm with this common destruction. Secondly, it was necessary to intimidate the Assembly, and the Girondist party in particular; sensible that they were likely to interfere, if it was left in their power, to prevent acts of cruelty incompatible with the principles of most or all of their number. Lastly, the Jacobin chiefs were aware, that ere they could prepare the public mind to endure the massacres which they meditated, it was necessary they should wait for one of those critical moments of general alarm, in which fear makes the multitude cruel, and when the agitations of rage and terror combine to unsettle men's reason, and drown at once their humanity and their understanding.

To collect prisoners in any numbers was an easy matter, when the mere naming a man, however innocent, as an aristocrat or a suspected person, especially if he happened to have a name indicative of gentle blood, and an air of decency in apparel, was sufficient ground for sending him to prison. For the purpose of making such arrests upon suspicion, the Community of Paris openly took upon themselves the office of granting warrants for imprisoning individuals in great numbers, and

at length proceeded so far in their violent and arbitrary conduct, as to excite the jealousy of the Legislative Body.

This Assembly of National Representatives seemed to have been stunned by the events of the 10th of August. Two-thirds of the deputies had a few days before exculpated La Fayette for the zeal with which he impeached the unsuccessful attempt of the 20th June, designed to accomplish the same purpose which had been effected on this last dread epoch of the Revolution. The same number, we must suppose, were inimical to the revolution achieved by the taking of the Tuileries, and the dethronement of the monarch, whom it had been La Fayette's object to protect and defend, in dignity and person. But there was no energy left in that portion of the Assembly, though by far the largest, and the wisest. Their benches were left deserted, nor did any voice arise, either to sustain their own dignity, or, as a last resource, to advise a union with the Girondists, now the leading force in the Representative Body, for the purpose of putting a period to the rule of revolutionary terror over that of civil order. The Girondists themselves proposed no decisive measures, and indeed appear to have been the most helpless party (though possessing in their ranks very considerable talent), that ever attempted to act a great part in the convulsions of a state.

They seem to have expected, that, so soon as they had accomplished the overthrow of the throne, their own supremacy should have been established in its room. They became, therefore, liable to the disappointment of a child, who, having built his house of boughs after his own fashion, is astonished to find those bigger and stronger than himself throw its materials out of their way, instead of attempting, according to his expectations, to creep into it, for the purpose of shelter.

Late and timidly, they at length began to remonstrate against the usurped power of the Community of Paris, who paid them as little regard, as they were themselves doing to the constituted authorities of the Executive Power.

The complaints which were laid before them of the violent encroachments made on the liberty of the people at large, the Girondists had hitherto answered by timid exhortations to the Community to be cautious in their proceedings. But on the 29th of August they were startled out of their weak inaction, by an assumption of open force, and open villany, on the part of those formidable rivals, under which it was impossible to remain silent. On the night previous, the Community, proceeding to act upon their own sole authority, had sent their satellites, consisting of the municipal officers who were exclusively attached to them (who were selected from the most de-

termined Jacobins, and had been augmented to an extraordinary number), to seize arms of every description, and to arrest suspicious persons in every corner of Paris. Hundreds and thousands of individuals had been, under these usurped powers, committed to the various prisons of the city, which were now filled even to choking, with all persons of every sex and age, against whom political hatred could allege suspicion, or private hatred revive an old quarrel, or love of plunder awake a thirst for confiscation.

The deeds of robbery, of license, and of ferocity, committed during these illegal proceedings, as well as the barefaced contempt which they indicated of the authority of the Assembly, awakened the Girondists, but too late, to some sense of the necessity of exertion. They summoned the municipality to their bar. They came, not to deprecate the displeasure of the Assembly, not to submit themselves to its mercy,—they came to triumph; and brought the speechless and trembling Pétion in their train, as their captive, rather than their mayor. Tallien explained the defence of the Community, which amounted to this: «The provisional representatives of the city of Paris,» he said, «had been calumniated; they appeared, to justify what they had done, not as accused persons, but as triumphing in having discharged their duty. The Sovereign People,» he

said, «had committed to them full powers, saying, Go forth, save the country in our name—whatever you do we will ratify.» This language was, in effect, that of defiance, and it was supported by the shouts and howls of assembled multitudes, armed as for the attack on the Tuileries, and their courage, it may be imagined, not the less, that there were neither aristocrats nor Swiss guards between them and the Legislative Assembly. Their cries were, «Long live our Community—our excellent commissioners—we will defend them or die!»

The satellites of the same party, in the tribunes or galleries, joined in the cry, with invectives on those members of the Assembly who were supposed, however republican in principles, to be opposed to the revolutionary measures of the Community. The mob without soon forced their way into the Hall,—joined with the mob within,—and left the theoretical republicans of the Assembly the choice of acquiescence in their dictates, flight, or the liberty of dying on their posts like the senators of that Rome which they admired. None embraced this last alternative. They broke up the meeting in confusion, and left the Jacobins, secure of impunity in whatever they might next chuse to attempt.

Thus, Danton and his fell associates achieved the second point necessary to the execution

of the horrors which they meditated; the Legislative Assembly were completely subdued and intimidated. It remained to avail themselves of some opportunity which might excite the people of Paris, in their present feverish state, to participate in, or to endure crimes, at which in calm moments the rudest would probably have shuddered. The state of affairs on the frontier aided them with such an opportunity—*aided* them, we say, because every step of preparation beforehand shows that the horrors acted on the 3d September were premeditated; nay, the very trenches destined to inhume hundreds and thousands of prisoners, yet alive, untried and undoomed, were already excavated.

A temporary success of the allied monarchs fell upon the mine already prepared, and gave fire to it, as lightning might have fired a powder magazine. Longwy, Stenay, and Verdun, were announced to have fallen into the hands of the King of Prussia. The first and last were barrier fortresses of reputed strength, and considerable resistance had been expected. The ardent and military spirit of the French was awakened in the resolute, upon learning that their frontier was thus invaded; fear and discomfiture took possession of others, who thought they already heard the allied trumpets at the gates of Paris. Between the eager desire of some to march against the army of the in-

vaders, and the terror and dismay of others, there arose a climax of excitation and alarm, favourable to the execution of every desperate design; as ruffians ply their trade best, and with least chance of interruption, in the midst of an earthquake or a conflagration.

On the 2d September, the Community of Paris announced the fall of Longwy, and the approaching fate of Verdun, and, as if it had been the only constituted authority in the country, commanded the most summary measures for the general defence. All citizens were ordered to keep themselves in readiness to march on an instant's warning. All arms were to be given up to the Community, save those in the hands of active citizens, armed for the public protection. Suspected persons were to be disarmed, and other measures were announced, all of which were calculated to call men's attention to the safety of themselves and their families, and to destroy the interest which at ordinary times the public would have taken in the fate of others.

The awful voice of Danton astounded the Assembly with similar information, hardly deigning to ask their approbation of the measures which the Community of Paris had adopted on their own sole authority. « You will presently hear, » he said, « the alarm-guns — falsely so called—for they are the signal of a charge. Courage—courage—and once again

courage, is all that is necessary to conquer our enemies.» These words, pronounced with the accent and attitude of an exterminating spirit, appalled and stupified the Assembly. We find nothing that indicated in them either interest in the imminent danger of the public from without, or in the usurpation from within. They appeared paralysed with terror.

The armed bands of Paris marched in different quarters, to seize arms and horses, to discover and denounce suspected persons; the youth fit for arms were everywhere mustered, and amid shouts, remonstrances, and debates, the general attention was so engaged, each individual with his own affairs, in his own quarter, that, without interference of any kind, whether from legal authority, or general sympathy, an universal massacre of the numerous prisoners was perpetrated, with a quietness and deliberation, which has not its parallel in history. The reader, who may be still surprised that a transaction so horrid should have passed without opposition or interruption, must be again reminded of the astounding effects of the popular victory of the 10th of August; of the total quiescence of the Legislative Assembly; of the want of an armed force of any kind to oppose such outrages; and of the epidemic panic which renders multitudes powerless and passive as infants. Should these causes not appear to him sufficient, he must

be contented to wonder at the facts we are to relate, as at one of those dreadful prodigies by which Providence confounds our reason, and shows what human nature can be brought to, when the restraints of morality and religion are cast aside.

The number of individuals accumulated in the various prisons of Paris had increased by the arrests and domiciliary visits subsequent to the loth of August, to about eight thousand persons. It was the object of this infernal scheme to destroy the greater part of these under one general system of murder, not to be executed by the sudden and furious impulse of an armed multitude, but with a certain degree of cold blood and deliberate investigation. A force of armed banditti, Marseillois partly, and partly chosen ruffians of the Faubourgs, proceeded to the several prisons, into which they either forced their passage, or were admitted by the jailers, most of whom had been apprised of what was to take place, though some even of these steeled officials exerted themselves to save those under their charge. A revolutionary tribunal was formed from among the armed ruffians themselves, who examined the registers of the prison, and summoned the captives individually to undergo the form of a trial. If the judges, as was almost always the case, declared for death, their doom, to prevent the efforts of men in

despair, was expressed in the words, "Give the prisoner freedom." The victim was then thrust out into the street, or yard; he was dispatched by men and women, who, with sleeves tucked up, arms dyed elbow-deep in blood, hands holding axes, pikes, and sabres, were executioners of the sentence; and, by the manner in which they did their office on the living, and mangled the bodies of the dead, showed that they occupied their post as much from pleasure as from love of hire. They often exchanged places; the judges going out to take the executioners' duty, the executioners, with their reeking hands, sitting as judges in their turn. Maillard, a ruffian alleged to have distinguished himself at the siege of the Bastille, but better known by his exploits upon the march to Versailles,[1] presided during these brief and sanguinary investigations. His companions on the bench were persons of the same stamp. Yet there were occasions when they showed some transient gleams of humanity, and it is not unimportant to remark, that boldness had more influence on them than any appeal to mercy or compassion. An avowed Royalist was occasionally dismissed uninjured, while the Constitutionalists were sure to be massacred. Another trait of a singular nature is, that two of the ruffians who were

[1] Vol. I. p. 189.

appointed to guard one of these intended victims home in safety, as a man acquitted, insisted upon seeing his meeting with his family, seemed to share in the transports of the moment, and on taking leave, shook the hand of their late prisoner, while their own were clotted with the gore of his friends, and had been just raised to shed his own. Few, indeed, and brief, were these symptoms of relenting. In general, the doom of the prisoner was death, and that doom was instantly accomplished.

In the mean while, the captives were penned up in their dungeons like cattle in a shambles, and in many instances might, from windows which looked outwards, mark the fate of their comrades, hear their cries, and behold their struggles, and learn, from the horrible scene, how they might best meet their own approaching fate. They observed, according to Saint Méard, who, in his well-named Agony of Thirty-Six Hours, has given the account of this fearful scene, that those who intercepted the blows of the executioners, by holding up their hands, suffered protracted torment, while those who offered no show of struggle were more easily dispatched; and they encouraged each other to submit to their fate, in the manner least likely to prolong their sufferings.

Many ladies, especially those belonging to the court, were thus murdered. The Prin-

cess de Lamballe, whose only crime seems to have been her friendship for Marie Antoinette, was literally hewn to pieces, and her head, and that of others, paraded on pikes through the metropolis. It was carried to the Temple on that accursed weapon, the features yet beautiful in death, and the long fair curls of the hair floating around the spear. The murderers insisted that the King and Queen should be compelled to come to the window to view this dreadful trophy. The municipal officers who were upon duty over the royal prisoners had difficulty, not merely in saving them from this horrible inhumanity, but also in preventing the prison from being forced. Three-coloured ribbons were extended across the street, and this frail barrier was found sufficient to intimate that the Temple was under the safeguard of the nation. We do not read that the efficiency of the three-coloured ribbons was tried for the protection of any of the other prisons. No doubt the executioners had their instructions where and when they should be respected.

The Clergy, who had declined the Constitutional oath from pious scruples, were, during the massacre, the peculiar objects of insult and cruelty, and their conduct was such as corresponded with their religious and conscientious professions. They were seen confessing themselves to each other, or receiving the confes-

sions of their lay companions in misfortune, and encouraging them to undergo the evil hour, with as much calmness as if they themselves had not been to share its bitterness. As protestants, we cannot abstractedly approve of the doctrines which render the established clergy of one country dependent upon a Sovereign Pontiff, the prince of an alien state. But these priests did not make the laws for which they suffered; they only obeyed them; and as men and christians we must regard them as martyrs, who preferred death to what they considered as apostacy.

In the brief intervals of this dreadful butchery, which lasted for four days, the judges and executioners ate, drank, and slept; and awoke from slumber, or rose from their meal, with fresh appetite for murder. There were places arranged for the male, and for the female murderers, for the work had been incomplete without the intervention of the latter. Prison after prison was invested, entered, and under the same form of proceeding, made the scene of the same inhuman butchery. The Jacobins had reckoned on making the massacre universal over France. But the example was not generally followed. It required, as in the case of Saint Bartholomew, the only massacre which can be compared to this in atrocity, the excitation of a large capital, in a violent crisis, to render such horrors possible.

The Community of Paris were not in fault for this. They did all they could to extend the sphere of murder. Their warrant brought from Orleans near sixty persons, including the Duke de Cossé-Brissac, De Lessart, the late minister, and other Royalists of distinction, who were to have been tried before the High Court of that Department. A band of assassins met them, by appointment of the Community, at Versailles, who, uniting with their escort, murdered almost the whole of these unhappy men.

From the 2d to the 6th of September, these infernal crimes proceeded uninterrupted, protracted by the actors for the sake of the daily pay of a louis to each, openly distributed amongst them, by order of the Commune.[1] It was either from a desire to continue as long as possible a labour so well requited, or because these beings had acquired an insatiable lust of murder, that, when the jails were emptied of state criminals, the assassins attacked the Bicêtre, a prison where ordinary delinquents were confined. These unhappy wretches offered a degree of resistance which cost the assailants more dear than any they had experienced from their proper victims. They were obliged to fire on them with cannon, and many

[1] The books of the Hôtel de Ville preserve evidence of this fact. Billaud-Varennes appeared publicly among the assassins, and distributed the price of blood.

hundreds of the miserable creatures were in this way exterminated, by wretches worse than themselves.

No exact account was ever made of the number of persons murdered during this dreadful period; but not above two or three hundred of the prisoners arrested for state offences were known to escape, or be discharged, and the most moderate computation raises the number of those who fell to two or three thousand, though some carry it to twice the extent. Truchod announced to the Legislative Assembly, that four thousand had perished. Some exertion was made to save the lives of persons imprisoned for debt, whose numbers, with those of common felons, may make up the balance betwixt the number slain, and eight thousand who were prisoners when the massacre began. The bodies were interred in heaps, in immense trenches, prepared beforehand by order of the Community of Paris; but their bones have since been transferred to the subterranean catacombs, which form the general charnel-house of the city. In those melancholy regions, while other relics of mortality lie exposed all around, the remains of those who perished in the massacres of September are alone secluded from the eye. The vault in which they repose is closed with a screen of freestone, as if relating to crimes unfit to

be thought of even in the proper abode of death, and which France would willingly hide in oblivion.

In the mean while the reader may be desirous to know what efforts were made by the Assembly, to save the lives of so many Frenchmen, or to put a stop to a massacre carried on in contempt of all legal interference, and by no more formidable force than that of two or three hundred atrocious felons, often, indeed, diminished to only fifty or sixty. He might reasonably expect that the National Representatives would have thundered forth some of those decrees which they formerly directed against the Crown, and the Noblesse; that they should have repaired by deputations to the various sections, called out the National Guards, and appealed to all, not only that were susceptible of honour or humanity, but to all who had the breath and being of man, to support them in interrupting a series of horrors disgraceful to mankind. Such an appeal to the feelings of their fellow-citizens made them at last successful in the overthrow of Robespierre. But the reign of Terror was now but in its commencement, and men had not yet learned that there lay a refuge in the efforts of Despair.

Instead of such energy as might have been expected from the principles of which they boasted, nothing could be more timid than the

conduct of the Girondists, being the only party in the Assembly who had the power, and might be supposed to have the inclination, to control the course of crime.

We looked carefully through the *Moniteurs*, which contain the official account of the sittings of the Assembly on these dreadful days. We find regular entries of many patriotic gifts, of such importance as the following:—A fusee from an Englishman—a pair of hackney-coach horses from the coachmen—a map of the country around Paris from a lady. While engaged in receiving and registering these civic donations, their journal bears few and doubtful references to the massacres then in progress. The Assembly issued no decree against the slaughter—demanded no support from the public force, and restricted themselves to sending to the murderers a pitiful deputation of twelve of their number, whose commission seems to have been limited to petition for the safety of one of their colleagues, belonging to the Constitutional faction. With difficulty they saved him, and the celebrated Abbé Sicard, the philanthropic instructor of the deaf and dumb, imprisoned as a non-juring priest, for whom the wails and tears of his hapless pupils had procured a reprieve even from the assassins. Dussaulx, one of that deputation, distinguished himself by the efforts which he

used to persuade the murderers to desist. « Return to your place,» said one of the ruffians, his arms crimsoned with blood. « You have made us lose too much time. Return to your own business, and leave us to ours.»

Dussaulx went back, to recount to those who had sent him what he had witnessed, and how he had been received; and concluded with the exclamation, «Woe 's me, that I should have lived to see such horrors, without the power of stopping them!» The Assembly heard the detail, and remained timid and silent as before.

Where, in that hour, were the men who formed their judgment upon the models presented by Plutarch, their feelings on the wild eloquence of Rousseau? Where were the Girondists, celebrated by one of their admirers,[1] as distinguished by good morals, by severe probity, by a profound respect for the dignity of man, by a deep sense of his rights and his duties, by a sound, constant, and immutable love of order, of justice, and of liberty? Were the eyes of such men blind, that they could not see the blood which flooded for four days the streets of the metropolis? were their ears deadened, that they could not hear the shouts of the murderers, and the screams of the vic-

[1] Buzot.

tims? or were their voices mute, that they called not upon God and man—upon the very stones of Paris, to assist them in interrupting such a crime? Political reasons have, by Royalist writers, been supposed to furnish a motive for their acquiescence; for there is, according to civilians, a certain degree of careless or timid imbecility, which can only be explained as having its origin in fraud. They allege that the Girondists saw, rather with pleasure than horror, the atrocities which were committed, while their enemies the Jacobins, exterminating their equally hated enemies the Constitutionalists and Royalists, took on themselves the whole odium of a glut of blood, which must soon, they might naturally expect, disgust the sense and feelings of a country so civilized as France. We remain, nevertheless, convinced, that Vergniaud, Brissot, Roland, and, to a certainty, his high-minded wife, would have stopped the massacres of September, had their courage and practical skill in public affairs borne any proportion to the conceit which led them to suppose, that their vocation lay for governing such a nation as France.

But whatever was the motive of their apathy, the Legislative Assembly was nearly silent on the subject of the massacres, not only while they were in progress, but for several days afterwards. On the 16th of September, when

news from the army on the frontiers was beginning to announce successes, and when the panic of the metropolis began to subside, Vergniaud adroitly charged the Jacobins with turning on unhappy prisoners of state the popular resentment, which should have animated them with bravery to march out against the common enemy. He upbraided also the Community of Paris with the assumption of unconstitutional powers, and the inhuman tyranny with which they had abused them; but his speech made little impression, so much are deeds of cruelty apt to become familiar to men's feelings, when of frequent recurrence. When the first accounts were read in the Constituent Assembly, of the massacres perpetrated at Avignon, the President fainted away, and the whole body manifested a horror, as well of the senses as of the mind; and now, that a far more cruel, more enduring, more extensive train of murders was perpetrated under their own eye, the Legislative Assembly looked on in apathy. The utmost which the eloquence of Vergniaud could extract from them was a decree, that in future the Community should be answerable with their own lives for the security of the prisoners under their charge. After passing this decree, the Legislative Assembly, being the second Representative Body of the French nation, dissolved itself according

to the resolutions of the 10th of August, to give place to the National Convention.

The Legislative Assembly was, in its composition and its character, of a caste greatly inferior to that which it succeeded. The flower of the talents of France had naturally centred in the National Assembly, and, by an absurd regulation, its members were incapacitated from being re-elected; which necessarily occasioned their situation being in many instances supplied by persons of inferior attainments. Then the destinies of the first Assembly had been fulfilled in a more lofty manner. They were often wrong, often absurd, often arrogant and presumptuous, but never mean or servile. They respected the liberty of debate, and even amidst the bitterest political discussions, defended the persons of their colleagues, however much opposed to them in sentiment, and maintained their constitutional inviolability. They had also the great advantage of being, as it were, free born. They were indeed placed in captivity by their removal to Paris, but their courage was not abated; nor did they make any concessions of a personal kind to the ruffians, by whom they were at times personally ill-used.

But the second, or Legislative Assembly, had, on the contrary, been captive from the moment of their first convocation. They had

never met but in Paris, and were inured to the habit of patient submission to the tribunes and the refuse of the city, who repeatedly broke into their Hall, and issued their mandates in the form of petitions. On two memorable occasions they showed too distinctly, that considerations of personal safety could overpower their sense of public duty. Two-thirds of the representatives joined in acquitting La Fayette, and declared by doing so that they abhorred the insurrection of the 20th of June; yet, when that of the 10th of August had completed what was before attempted in vain upon the occasion preceding, the Assembly unanimously voted the deposition of the monarch, and committed him to prison. Secondly, they remained silent and inactive during all the horrors of September, and suffered the executive power to be wrenched out of their hands by the Community of Paris, and used before their eyes for the destruction of many thousands of Frenchmen whom they represented.

It must be, however, remembered, that the Legislative Assembly were oppressed by difficulties and dangers the most dreadful that can threaten a government;—the bloody discord of contending factions, the arms of foreigners menacing the frontier, and civil war breaking out in the provinces. In addition to these sources of peril and dismay, there were three

divided parties within the Assembly itself; while a rival power, equally formidable from its audacity and its crimes, had erected itself in predominating authority, like that of the Maires du Palais over the feeble monarchs of the Merovingian dynasty.

## CHAPTER III.

Election of Representatives for the National Convention. —Jacobins are very active.—Right hand Party—Left hand side—Neutral Members.—The Girondists are in possession of the ostensible Power—They denounce the Jacobin Chiefs, but in an irregular and feeble manner.—Marat, Robespierre, and Danton, supported by the Community and Populace of Paris.—France declared a Republic.—Duke of Brunswick's Campaign—Neglects the French Emigrants—Is tardy in his Operations—Occupies the poorest part of Champagne—His Army becomes sickly—Prospects of a Battle.—Dumourier's Army recruited with Carmagnoles.—The Duke resolves to retreat—Thoughts on the consequences of that Measure—The Retreat disastrous.—The Emigrants disbanded in a great measure—Reflections on their Fate.—The Prince of Condé's Army.



It was of course the object of each party to obtain the greatest possible majority in the National Convention now to be assembled, for arranging upon some new footing the government of France, and for replacing that Constitution to which faith had been so repeatedly sworn.

The Jacobins made the most energetic exer-

tions. They not only wrote missives through their two thousand affiliated societies, but sent three hundred commissaries, or delegates, to superintend the elections in the different towns and departments; to exhort their comrades not only to be firm, but to be enterprising; and to seize with strong hand the same power over the public force, which the mother society possessed in Paris. The advice was poured into willing ears; for it implied the sacred right of insurrection, with the concomitant privileges of pillage and slaughter.

The power of the Jacobins was irresistible in Paris, where Robespierre, Danton, and Marat, who shared the high places in their synagogue, were elected by an immense majority; and of the twenty deputies who represented Paris, there were not above five or six unconnected with the massacres. Nor were they anywhere unsuccessful, where there existed enough of their adherents to overawe by threats, clamour, and violence, the impartial voice of the public.

But in every state there is a great number of men who love order for itself, and for the protection it affords to property. There were also a great many persons at heart Royalists, either pure or constitutional, and all these united in sending to the National Convention deputies, who, if no opportunity occurred of restoring the monarchy, might at least co-ope-

rate with the Girondists and more moderate Republicans in saving the life of thè unfortunate Louis, and in protecting men's lives, and property in general, from the infuriate violence of the Jacobins. These supporters of order—we know no better name to assign to them—were chiefly representatives of the departments, where electors had more time to discriminate and reflect, than when under the influence of the revolutionary societies and clubs of the towns. Yet Nantes, Bordeaux, Marseilles, Lyons, and other towns, chiefly in the west and south, were disposed to support the Girondists, and sent deputies favourable to their sentiments. Thus the Convention, when assembled, still presented the appearance of two strong parties; and the feebl'eness of that, which, being moderate in its views, only sought to act defensively, consisted not in want of numbers, but in want of energy.

It was no good omen, that on taking their places in the Assembly, these last assumed the Right Side; a position which seemed doomed to defeat, since it had been successively occupied by the suppressed parties of moderate Royalists and Constitutionalists. There was defeat in the very sound of the *parti droit*, whereas the left-hand position had always been that of victory. Men's minds are moved by small incidents in dubious times. Even this choice of seats made an impression upon

spectators and auditors unfavourable to the Girondists, as all naturally shrink from a union with bad fortune. There was a considerable party of neutral members, who, without joining themselves to the Girondists, affected to judge impartially betwixt contending parties. They were chiefly men of consciences too timid to go all the lengths of the Jacobins, but also of too timid nerves to oppose them openly and boldly. These were sure to succumb on all occasions, when the Jacobins judged it necessary to use their favourite argument of popular terror.

The Girondists took possession, however, of all ostensible marks of power. Danton was dismissed from his place as Minister of Justice; and they were, as far as mere official name and title could bestow it on them, in possession of the authority of government. But the ill-fated regulation which excluded ministers from seats in the Assembly, and consequently from any right save that of defence, proved as fatal to those of the new system, as it had done to the executive government of Louis.

Our remarks upon the policy of the great change from monarchy to a republic will be more in place elsewhere. Indeed, violent as the change sounded in words, there was not such an important alteration in effect as to produce much sensation. The Constitution of 1791 was a democracy to all intents and

purposes, leaving little power with the King, and that little subject to be so much cramped and straitened in its operation, that the royal authority was even smaller in practice than it had been limited in theory. When to this is added, that Louis was a prisoner amongst his subjects, acting under the most severe restraint, and endangering his life every time he attempted to execute his constitutional power, he must long have been held rather an incumbrance on the motions and councils of the state, than as one of its efficient constituted authorities. The nominal change of the system of government scarcely made a greater alteration in the internal condition of France, than the change of a sign makes upon a house of entertainment, where the business of the tavern is carried on in the usual way, although the place is no longer distinguished as the King's Head.

While France was thus alarmed and agitated within, by change, by crime, by the most bitter political factions, the dawn of that course of victory had already risen on the frontiers, which, in its noon-day splendour, was to blaze fiercely over all Europe. It is not our purpose to detail military events at present; we shall have but too many of them to discuss hereafter. We shall barely state, that the Duke of Brunswick's campaign, considered as relative to his proclamation, forms too good an illustra-

tion of the holy text, « Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.» The Duke was at the head of a splendid army, which had been joined by fifteen thousand emigrants in the finest state of equipment, burning with zeal to rescue the King, and avenge themselves on those by whom they had been driven from their country. From what fatality it is hard to conceive, but the Duke of Brunswick seems to have looked with a certain degree of coldness and suspicion on those troops, whose chivalrous valour and high birth called them to the van, instead of the rear, in which the generalissimo was pleased to detain them. The chance of success that might justly have been expected from the fiery energy which was the very soul of French chivalry, from the fear which such an army might have inspired, or perhaps from the friends whom they might have found, was altogether lost. There was something in this extraordinary conduct, which almost vindicated the suspicion that Prussia was warring on her own account, and was not disposed to owe too much of the expected success to the valour of the emigrants. And it escaped not the remark, both of the emigrants and the French at large, that Longwy and Verdun were ostentatiously taken possession of by the allies, not under the name of the King of France, or the Comte d'Artois, but in that of

the Emperor; which appeared to give colour to the invidious report, that the allies were to be indemnified for the cost of their assistance at the expense of the French line of frontier towns. Neither did the Duke use his fine army of Prussians, or direct the motions of the Austrians under Clairfayt, to any greater advantage. He had, indeed, the troops of the Great Frederick; but under the command of an irresolute and incapable leader, it was the sword of Scanderbeg in the hands of a boy.

This tardiness of the Duke of Brunswick's movements intimated a latent doubt of his own capacity to conduct the campaign. The superiority of his veteran and finely-disciplined forces over the disorganized army of Dumourier, reinforced as it was by crowds of Federates, who were perfect strangers to war, would have been best displayed by bold and rapid movements, evincing at once activity and combination, and alarming raw troops by a sense of danger, not in front alone, but on every point. Each day which these new soldiers spent unfought was one step towards military discipline, and, what is more, towards military confidence. The general who had threatened so hard seemed to suspend his blow in indecision; and he remained trifling on the frontiers, «when Frederic, had he been in our front,» said the French general, «would long since have driven us back upon Chalons.»

The result of so many false steps began soon to appear. Brunswick, whose army was deficient in battering guns, though entering France on a frontier of fortifications, was arrested by the obstinate defence of Thionville. Having at length decided to advance, he spent nine days in marching thirty leagues, but omitted to possess himself of the defiles of Argonnes, by which alone the army of Luckner could co-operate with that of Dumourier. The allied general now found himself in the most elevated part of the province of Champagne, branded for its poverty and sterility with the unseemly name *La Champagne Pouilleuse*, where he found difficulty to subsist his army. Meantime, if corn and forage were scarce, grapes and melons were, unfortunately, plenty. These last fruits are so proverbially unwholesome, that the magistrates of Liege, and some other towns, forbid the peasants to bring them to market under pain of confiscation. It was the first time such delicacies had been presented to the hyperborean appetites of the Prussians; and they could not resist the temptation, though the same penalty was annexed to the banquet, as to that which produced the first transgression. They ate and died. A fatal dysentery broke out in the camp, which swept the soldiers away by hundreds in a day, sunk the spirits of the survivors, and seems to have totally broken the courage of their commander.

Two courses remained to the embarrassed general. One was, to make his way by giving battle to the French, by attacking them in the strong position which they had been permitted to occupy, notwithstanding the ease with which they might have been anticipated. It is true, Dumourier had been very strongly reinforced. France, from all her departments, had readily poured forth many thousands of her fiery youth, from city and town, village and grange and farm, to protect the frontiers, at once, from the invasion of foreigners, and the occupation of thousands of vengeful emigrants. They were undisciplined, indeed, but full of zeal and courage, heated and excited by the scenes of the republic, and inflamed by the florid eloquence, the songs, dances, and signal-words with which it had been celebrated. Above all, they were of a country, which, of all others in Europe, has been most familiar with war, and the youth of which are most easily rendered amenable to military discipline.

But to these new levies the Duke of Brunswick might have safely opposed the ardent valour of the emigrants, men descended of families whose deeds of chivalry fill the registers of Europe; men by whom the road to Paris was regarded as that which was to conduct them to victory, to honour, to the rescue of their King, to reunion with their families,

to the recovery of their patrimony; men accustomed to consider disgrace as more dreadful by far than death, and who claimed, as their birth-right, military renown and the use of arms. In one skirmish, fifteen hundred of the emigrant cavalry had defeated, with great slaughter, a column of the Carmagnoles, as the republican levies were called. They were routed with great slaughter, and their opponents had the pleasure to count among the slain a considerable number of the assassins of September.

But the French general had more confidence in the Carmagnole levies, from which his military genius derived a valuable support, than Brunswick thought proper to repose in the chivalrous gallantry of the French noblesse. He could only be brought to engage in one action, of artillery, near Valmy, which was attended with no marked consequence, and then issued his order for a retreat. It was in vain that the Comte d'Artois, with a spirit worthy of the line from which he was descended, and the throne to which he has now succeeded, entreated, almost implored, a recal of this fatal order; in vain that he offered in person to head the emigrant forces, and to assume with them the most desperate post in the battle, if the generalissimo would permit it to be fought. But the Duke, obstinate in his desponding, in proportion to his former

presumption, was not of that high mind which adopts hazardous counsels in desperate cases. He saw his army mouldering away around him, beheld the French forming in his rear, knew that the resources of Prussia were unequal to a prolonged war, and, after one or two feeble attempts to negotiate for the safety of the captive Louis, he was at length contented to accept an implied permission to retreat without molestation. He raised his camp on the 30th of September, and left behind him abundant marks of the dreadful state to which his army was reduced.

When we look back on these events, and are aware of Dumourier's real opinions, and the interest which he took in the fate of the King, we have little reason to doubt, that the Duke of Brunswick might, by active and prompt measures, have eluded that general's defensive measures; nay, that judicious negotiation might have induced him, on certain points being conceded, to have united a part at least of his forces with those of the emigrants in a march to Paris, for the King's rescue, and the punishment of the Jacobins.

But had the restoration of Louis XVI. taken place by the armed hand of the emigrants and the allies, the final event of the war must still have been distant. Almost the whole body of the kingdom was diametrically opposed to the restoration of the absolute monarchy with all

its evils; and yet it must have been the object of the emigrants, in case of success, again to establish, not only royalty in its utmost prerogative, but all the oppressive privileges and feudal subjections which the Revolution had swept away. Much was to have been dreaded, too, from the avidity of the strangers, whose arms had assisted the imprisoned Louis, and much more from what has since been aptly termed the Reaction, which must have taken place upon a counter-revolution. It was greatly to be apprehended, that the emigrants, always deeming too lightly of the ranks beneath them, incensed by the murder of their friends, and stung by their own private wrongs and insults, would, if successful, have treated the Revolution not as an exertion of the public will of France to free the country from public grievances, but as a *Jacquerie* (which in some of its scenes it too much resembled), a domestic treason of the vassals against their liege lords. It was the will of Providence, that the experience of twenty years and upwards should make manifest, that in the hour of victory itself concessions to the defeated, as far as justice demands them, is the only mode of deriving permanent and secure peace.

The retreat of the Prussians was executed in the worst possible order, as is usually the case of such a manœuvre when unprovided for, and executed by troops who had been led to expect

a very different movement. But if to them it was a measure of disaster and disgrace, it was, to the unfortunate emigrants who had joined their standard, the signal of utter despair and ruin. These corps were composed of gentlemen, who, called suddenly and unprovided from their families and homes, had only brought with them such moderate sums of money as could be raised in an emergency, which they had fondly conceived would be of very brief duration. They had expended most of their funds in providing themselves with horses, arms, and equipments—some part must have been laid out in their necessary subsistence, for they served chiefly at their own expense—and perhaps, as might have been expected among high-spirited and high-born youths, their slender funds had not been managed with an economical view of the possibility of the reverses which had taken place. In the confusion and disorder of the retreat, their baggage was plundered by their auxiliaries, that is to say, by the disorderly Prussian soldiers, who had shaken loose all discipline; and they were in most cases reduced for instant maintenance to sell their horses at such paltry prices as they could obtain. To end the history of such of this devoted army as had been engaged in the Duke of Brunswick's campaign, they were disbanded at Juliers, in November 1792.

The blindness of the sovereigns, who, still

continuing a war on France, suffered such fine troops to be dissolved for want of the means of support, was inexcusable; their cold and hard-hearted conduct towards a body of gentlemen, who, if politically wrong, were at least devoted to the cause for which Austria asserted that she continued in arms, was equally unwise and ungenerous. These gallant gentlemen might have upbraided the kings who had encouraged, and especially the general who led, this ill-fated expedition, in the words of Shakspeare, if he had been known to them,—

> Hast thou not spoke like thunder on our side,
> Been sworn our soldier—bidding us depend
> Upon thy stars, thy fortune, and thy strength?

But the reproaches of those who have no remedy but the exposition of their wrongs seldom reach the ears of the powerful by whom these wrongs have been committed.

It is not difficult to conceive the agony with which these banished gentlemen abandoned all hopes of saving the life of their King, and the recovery of their rank and fortune. All their proud vaunts of expected success were lost, or converted into serpents to sting them. They had no hope before them, and, what is worst to men of high spirit, they had fallen with scarce a blow struck for honour, far less for victory. They were now doomed, such as

could, to exercise for mere subsistence the prosecution of sciences and arts, which they had cultivated to adorn prosperity—to wander in foreign lands, and live upon the precarious charity of foreign powers, embittered everywhere by the reflections of some, who pitied the folly that could forfeit rank and property for a mere point of honour; and of others, who saw in them the enemies of rational liberty, and upbraided them with the charge, that their misfortunes were the necessary consequence of their arbitrary principles.

It might have in some degree mitigated their calamity, could some gifted sage have shown them, at such distance as the Legislator of Israel beheld the Promised Land from Mount Pisgah, the final restoration of the royal house, in whose cause they had suffered shipwreck of their all. But how many perished in the wilderness of misfortune which intervened—how few survived the twenty years' wandering which conducted to this promised point! and of those few, who, war-worn and wearied by misfortunes, survived the restoration of royalty, how very few were rewarded by more than the disinterested triumph which they felt on that joyful occasion! and how many might use the simile of a royalist of Britain on a similar occasion,—« The fleece of Gideon remained dry, while the hoped-for restoration shed showers of blessings on all France beside! »

The emigrant regiments, under the command of the Prince of Condé, had another and nobler fate. They retained their arms, and signalized themselves by their exertions; were consumed by the sword, and in toils of service, and died at least the death of soldiers, mourned, and not unrevenged. But they were wasting their devoted courage in the service of foreigners; and if their gallantry was gratified by the defeat of those whom they regarded as the murderers of their King, and as usurpers of their rights, they might indeed feel that their revenge was satiated, but scarce in any sense could they regard their victories as serviceable to the cause to which they had sacrificed their country, their possessions, their hopes, their lives. Their fate, though on a much more extensive scale, much resembles that of the officers of the Scottish army in 1690, who, following the fortunes of James II. to France, were at length compelled to form themselves into a battalion of privates, and, after doing many feats of gallantry in the service of the country where they found refuge, at length melted away under the sword of the enemy, and the privations of military service. History, while she is called upon to censure or commend the actions of mankind according to the rules of immutable justice, is no less bound to lament the brave and generous, who, preferring the dictates of honourable feeling to those of prudence. are hurried

into courses which may be doubtful in policy, and perhaps in patriotism, but to which they are urged by the disinterested wish of discharging what they account a conscientious duty. The emigrants were impolitic, perhaps, in leaving France, though that conduct had many apologies; and their entrance into their country in arms to bring back the despotic system, which Louis XVI. and the whole nation, save themselves, had renounced, was an enterprise unwisely and unjustly undertaken. But the cause they embraced was one dear to all the prejudices of the rank and sentiments in which they had been brought up; their loyal purpose in its defence is indisputable; and it would be hard to condemn them for following one extreme, when the most violent and tyrannical proceedings were, in the sight of all Europe, urging another, so bloody, black, and fatal as that of the faction which now domineered in Paris, and constrained men, whose prejudices of birth or education were in favour of freedom, to loathe the very name of France, and of the Revolution.

The tame and dishonourable retreat of the Duke of Brunswick and his Prussians naturally elated the courage of a proud and martial people. Recruits flowed into the Republican ranks from every department; and the generals, Custine on the Rhine, and Montesquiou on the side of Savoy, with Dumourier in the Nether-

lands, knew how to avail themselves of these reinforcements, which enabled them to assume the offensive on all parts of the extensive south-eastern frontier of France.

The attack of Savoy, whose sovereign, the King of Sardinia, was brother-in-law of the Comte d'Artois, and had naturally been active in the cause of the Bourbons, was successfully commenced, and carried on by General Montesquiou already mentioned, a French noble, and an aristocrat of course by birth, and as it was believed by principle, but to whom, nevertheless, the want of experienced leaders had compelled the ruling party at Paris to commit the command of an army. He served them well, possessed himself of Nice and Chambery, and threatened even Italy.

On the centre of the same line of frontier, Custine, an excellent soldier and a fierce republican, took Spires, Oppenheim, Worms, finally the strong city of Mentz, and spread dismay through that portion of the Germanic empire. Adopting the republican language of the day, he thundered forth personal vengeance, denounced in the most broad and insulting terms, against such princes of the Germanic body as had distinguished themselves by zeal against the Revolution; and, what was equally formidable, he preached to their subjects the flattering and exciting doctrines of

the Republicans, and invited them to join in the sacred league of the oppressed people against princes and magistrates, who had so long held over them an usurped power.

But the successes of Dumourier were of a more decided and more grateful character to the ruling men in the Convention. He had a heavier task than either Custine or Montesquiou; but his lively and fertile imagination had already devised modes of conquest with the imperfect means he possessed. The difference between commanders is the same as between mechanics. A workman of commonplace talents, however expert custom and habit may have made him in the use of his ordinary tools, is at a loss when deprived of those which he is accustomed to work with. The man of invention and genius finds out resources, and contrives to make such implements as the moment supplies answer his purpose, as well, and perhaps better, than a regular chest of working utensils. The ideas of the ordinary man are like a deep-rutted road, through which his imagination moves slowly, and without departing from the track; those of the man of genius are like an avenue, clear, open, and smooth, on which he may traverse as occasion requires.

Dumourier was a man of genius, resource, and invention; Clairfayt, who was opposed to

him, a brave and excellent soldier, but who had no idea of stratégie or tactics, save those current during the Seven Years' War. The former knew so well how to employ the fire and eagerness of his Carmagnoles, of whose blood he was by no means chary, and how to prevent the consequences of their want of discipline, by reserves of his most steady and experienced troops, that he gave Clairfayt a signal defeat at Jemappes, on the 6th November 1792.

It was then that both Austria and Europe had reason to regret the absurd policy of Joseph II., both in indisposing the inhabitants towards his government, and, in the fine provinces of the Austrian Netherlands, dismantling the iron girdle of fortified towns, with which the wisdom of Europe had invested that frontier. Clairfayt, who, though defeated, was too good a disciplinarian to be routed, had to retreat on a country unfriendly to the Austrians, from recollection of their own recent insurrection, and divested of all garrison towns; which must have been severe checks, particularly at this period, to the incursion of a revolutionary army, more fitted to win battles by its impetuosity, than to overcome obstacles which could only be removed by long and patient sieges.

As matters stood, the battle of Jemappes was

won, and the Austrian Netherlands were fully conquered without further combat by the French general. We shall leave him in his triumph, and return to the fatal scenes acting in Paris.

## CHAPTER IV.

Jacobins determine upon the Execution of Louis.—Progress and Reasons of the King's Unpopularity.—Girondists taken by surprise, by a proposal for the Abolition of Royalty made by the Jacobins—Proposal carried.—Thoughts on the New System of Government—Compared with that of Rome, Greece, America, and other Republican States.—Enthusiasm throughout France at the Change—Follies it gave birth to—And Crimes.—Monuments of Art destroyed.—Madame Roland interposes to save the Life of the King.—Barrère.—Girondists move for a Departmental Legion—Carried—Revoked—and Girondists defeated.—The Authority of the Community of Paris paramount even over the Convention.—Documents of the Iron-Chest.—Parallel betwixt Charles I. and Louis XVI.—Motion by Pétion, that the King should be Tried before the Convention.

It is generally to be remarked, that Crime, as well as Religion, has her sacramental associations, fitted for the purposes to which she desires to pledge her votaries. When Catiline imposed an oath on his fellow-conspirators, a slave was murdered, and his blood mingled with the beverage in which they pledged each

other to their treason against the republic. The most desperate mutineers and pirates too have believed, that by engaging their associates in some crime of a deep and atrocious nature, so contrary to the ordinary feelings of humanity as to strike with horror all who should hear of it, they made their allegiance more completely their own; and, as remorse is useless where retreat is impossible, that they thus rendered them in future the desperate and unscrupulous tools, necessary for the desperate designs of their leaders.

In like manner, the Jacobins,—who had now full possession of the passions and confidence of the lower orders in France, as well as of all those spirits among the higher classes who, whether desirous of promotion by exertions in the revolutionary path, or whether enthusiasts whose imagination had become heated with the extravagant doctrines that had been current during these feverish times,—the Jacobins resolved to engage their adherents, and all whom they influenced, in proceeding to the death of the unfortunate Louis. They had no reason to doubt that they might excite the populace to desire and demand that final sacrifice, and to consider the moment of its being offered as a time of jubilee. Nor were the better classes likely to take a warm or decisive interest in the fate of their unhappy prince, so long the object of unpopularity.

From the beginning of the Revolution, down to the total overthrow of the throne, first the power of the King, and afterwards his person and the measures to which he resorted, were the constant subject of attack by the parties who successively forced themselves into his administration. Each faction accused the other during the time of their brief sway, of attempts to extend the power and the privileges of the crown; which was thus under a perpetual siege, though carried on by distinct and opposite factions, one of whom regularly occupied the lines of attack, to dislodge the others, as fast as they obtained successively possession of the ministry. Thus the Third Estate overcame the two privileged classes, in behalf of the people and against the crown; La Fayette and the Constitutionalists triumphed over the Moderates, who desired to afford the King the shelter and bulwark of an intermediate Senate; and then, after creating a constitution as democratical as it could be, leaving a name and semblance of Royalty, they sunk under the Girondists, who were disposed altogether to dispense with that symbol. In this way it appeared to the people that the King was their natural enemy, and that the royal interest was directly opposed to a revolution which had brought them sundry advantages, besides giving them the feelings and consequence of freemen. In this manner, one of the mildest

and best-disposed monarchs that ever swayed a sceptre became exposed to general suspicion and misconstruction in his measures, and (as is sure speedily to follow) to personal contempt, and even hatred. Whatever the King did, in compliance with the current tide of Revolution, was accounted as fraudful complaisance, designed to blind the nation. Whatever opposition he made to that powerful impulse was accounted an act of open treason against the sovereignty of the people.

His position, with regard to the invading powers, was enough of itself to load him with obloquy and suspicion. It is true, that he was called, and professed himself, the willing King of a popular, or democratic monarchy; but in the proclamations of his allies, he was described as a monarch imprisoned, degraded, and almost dethroned. To achieve his liberty (as they affirmed), and to re-establish his rights, the Emperor his brother-in-law, the King of Prussia his ally, and above all, his brothers, the Princes of the Blood of France, were in arms, and had sent numerous armies to the frontiers. It was scarcely possible, in the utmost extent of candour, that the French people should give Louis credit for desiring the success of the revolutionary cause, by which not only his power had been circumscribed, but his person had been placed under virtual restraint, against forces armed avowedly for his

safety and liberty, as well as the restoration of his power. We can allow as much to the disinterestedness of Louis, as to any whose feelings and rights were immediately concerned with the point at issue; and we admit that all concessions which he made to the popular cause, before the National Assembly had asserted a paramount authority over his, were willingly and freely granted. But after the march from Versailles, he must have been an enthusiast for public liberty of a very uncommon character, if we could suppose him seriously wishing the defeat of his brothers and allies, and the victory of those who had deprived him first of authority, and then of freedom.

A single glance at his situation must have convinced the people of France, that Louis could scarcely be sincere in desiring the continuance of the system to which he had given his adhesion as sovereign; and the consciousness that they could not expect confidence where they themselves had made ungenerous use of their power, added force to their suspicions, and acrimony to the deep resentments which arose out of them. The people had identified themselves and their dearest interests (right or wrong, it signifies little to the result) with the Revolution, and with the increasing freedom which it bestowed, or rather promised to bestow, in every succeeding

change. The King, who had been the regular opponent of every one of these innovations, was in consequence regarded as the natural enemy of the country, who, if he continued to remain at the helm of the executive government, did so with the sole view of running the vessel upon the rocks.

If there were any men in France generous enough to give the King credit for complete good faith with the Constitutionalists, his flight from Paris, and the manifestos which he left behind him, protesting against the measures in which he had acquiesced, as extorted from him by constraint, gave open proof of Louis's real feelings. It is true, the King denied any purpose of leaving the kingdom, or throwing himself into the hands of the foreign powers; but it could escape no one, that such a step, however little it was calculated upon in the commencement of his flight, might very easily have become inevitable before its completion. It does not appear, from the behaviour of the escorts of dragoons and hussars, that there was any attachment amongst the troops to the King's person; and had the mutiny of Bouillé's forces against that general's authority taken place after the King reached the camp, the only safety of Louis must have been in a retreat into the Austrian territory. This chance was so evident, that Bouillé himself had provided for it, by requesting that the Austrian

forces might be so disposed as to afford the King protection, should the emergency occur. Whatever, therefore, might be the King's first experiment, the point to which he directed his flight bore out those, who supposed and asserted that it must have ultimately terminated in his reunion with his brothers; and that such a conclusion must have repeatedly occurred to the King's thoughts.

But if the King was doubted and suspected before he gave this decisive proof of his disinclination to the Constitution, there had surely happened nothing in the course of his being seized at Varennes, or the circumstances of his reception at Paris, tending to reconcile him to the Constitutional Crown, which was a second time proffered him, and which he again, with all its duties and acts of self-denial, solemnly accepted.

We have before hinted, that the King's assuming of new the frail and barren sceptre, proffered to him under the most humiliating circumstances, was a piece of indifferent policy. There occurred almost no course of conduct by which, subjected as he was to general suspicion, he could show himself once more to his people in a clear and impartial point of view—each of his measures was sure to be the theme of the most malignant commentary. If his conduct assumed a popular aspect, it was accounted an act of princely hypocrisy; if it was

like his opposition to the departmental army, it would have been held as intended to weaken the defence of the country; if it resembled his rejection of the decrees against the emigrants and refractory priests, then it might be urged as inferring a direct intention of bringing back the old despotic system.

In short, all confidence was lost between the sovereign and the people, from a concurrence of unhappy circumstances, in which it would certainly be unjust to cast the blame exclusively on either party, since there existed so many grounds for distrust and misunderstanding on both sides. The noble and generous confidence which Frenchmen had been wont to repose in the personal character of their monarch (that confidence, which the probity of no man could deserve more than that of Louis) was withered, root and branch; or those in whose breasts it still flourished were banished men, and had carried the Oriflamme, and the ancient spirit of French chivalry, into a camp not her own. The rest of the nation, a scattered and intimidated remnant of Royalists excepted, were Constitutionalists, who, friends rather to the crown than to the King as an individual, wished to preserve the form of government, but without either zeal or attachment to Louis; or Girondists, who detested his office as Republicans; or Jacobins, who hated his person. Every one,

therefore, assailed Louis; and it was held enrolling himself amongst aristocrats, the most avowed and hated enemies of the new order of things, if any one lifted a voice in his defence, or even apology.

To this the influence of the revolutionary clubs, amounting to so many thousands, and of the daily press, almost the only kind of literature which France had left, added the full tribute of calumny and inculpation. The Jacobins attacked the person of the King from the very commencement of the Revolution; for they desired that Louis should be dethroned, even when some amongst them were leagued for placing Orleans in his room. The Girondists, on the contrary, would have been well contented to spare the person of Louis; but they urged argument after argument in the journal which they directed, against the royal office. But upon the whole, the King, whether in his royal or personal character, had been so long and uniformly calumniated and misinterpreted, that through most parts of France he was esteemed the enemy whom the people had most to dread, and whom they were most interested to get rid of. In evidence of which it may be added, that during all successive changes of parties, for the next year or two, the charge of a disposition towards royalty was always made an aggravation of the accusations which the parties brought against

ı other, and was considered as so necessary ingredient of the charge, that it was not tted even when circumstances rendered it ossible.

oth parties in the Convention were thus pared to acquire popularity, by gratifying almost universal prejudices against monar-, and against the King. The Girondists, stant to the republican principles they ertained, had resolved to abolish the throne; their audacious rivals were prepared to go ep beyond them, by gratifying the popular ·it of vengeance which their own calumnies increased to such a pitch, by taking the of the dethroned monarch. This was the at national crime which was to serve France a republican baptism, and which, once ımitted, was to be regarded as an act of initive and deadly adhesion to the cause of Revolution. But not contented with tak- measures for the death of the monarch, desperate but active faction resolved to icipate their rivals in the proposal for the lition of royalty.

The Girondists, who counted much on the ularity which they were to attain by this ourite measure, were so far from fearing anticipation of the Jacobins, that, under idea of Orleans having some interest re- ining with Danton and others, they rather ected some opposition on their part. But

what was their surprise and mortification when [1] Manuel arose, and demanded that the first proposal submitted to the Convention should be the abolition of royalty! Ere the Girondists could recover from their surprise, Collot d'Herbois, a sorry comedian, who had been hissed from the stage, desired the motion to be instantly put to the vote. The Girondists, anticipated in their scheme, had no resource left but to be clamorous in applauding the motion, lest their hesitation had brought their republican zeal into question. Thus all they could do was but to save their credit with the popular party, at a time when they expected to increase it to such a height. Their antagonists had been so alert as to steal the game out of their hands.

The violence with which the various orators expressed themselves against monarchy of every complexion, and kings in general, was such as to show, either that they were in no state of mind composed enough to decide on a great national measure, or that the horrors of the massacres, scarce ten days remote, impressed on them the danger of being lukewarm in the cause of the sovereign people, who were not only judges without resort, but the prompt executioners of their own decrees.

The Abbé Grégoire declared, that the dy-

[1] 21st September, 1792.

nasties of kings were a race of devouring animals, who fed on the blood of the people; and that kings were in the moral order of things what monsters are in the physical—that courts were the arsenals of crimes, and the centre of corruption—and that the history of princes was the martyrology of the people. Finally, that all the members of the Convention, being fully sensible of these self-evident truths, it was needless to delay even for a moment the vote of abolition, reserving it to more leisure to put their declaration into better form. Ducos exclaimed, that the crimes of Louis alone formed a sufficient reason for the abolition of monarchy. The motion was received and passed unanimously; and each side of the Hall, anxious to manifest their share in this great measure, echoed back to the other the new war-cry of *Vive la République!* Thus fell, at the voice of a wretched player and cut-throat, backed by that of a renegade priest, the most ancient and most distinguished monarchy of Europe. A few remarks may be permitted upon the new government, the adoption of which had been welcomed with so much gratulation.

It has been said, that the government which is best administered is best. This maxim is true for the time, but for the time only; as good administration depends often on the life of individuals, or other circumstances in them-

selves mutable. One would rather incline to say, that the government is best calculated to produce the happiness of a nation, which is best adapted to the existing state of the country which it governs, and possesses at the same time such internal means of regeneration as may enable it to keep pace with the changes of circumstances, and accommodate itself to the unavoidable alterations which must occur in a progressive state of society. In this point of view, and even in the patriarchal circle, the most natural form of government, in the early periods of society, is Monarchy, or a Republic. The father is head of his own family; the assembled council of the fathers governs the republic; or the *patria potestas* of the whole state is bestowed upon some successful warrior or eminent legislator, who becomes king of the tribe. But a republic, in the literal acceptation, which supposes all the individuals subject to its government to be consulted in council upon all affairs of the public, cannot survive the most early period of existence. It is only to be found around the council-fire of a North American tribe of Indians; and even there, the old men, forming a sort of senate, have already established a sort of aristocracy. As society advances, and the little state extends itself, ordinary matters of government are confided to delegates, or exclusively grasped by some of the higher orders of the state. Rome,

when she dismissed the Tarquins, the period to which the Girondists were fond of assimilating that of the French Revolution, had already its privileged body of patricians, its senate, from which were exclusively chosen the consuls; until at a later period, and at the expense of many feuds with the patricians, the plebeians succeeded in obtaining for their order many advantages. But the state of Rome was not more republican, in the proper sense, than before these concessions. The corporate citizens of Rome were indeed admitted into some of the privileges of the nobles; but the quantity of territory and of population over which these citizens extended their dominion was so great, that the rural and unrepresented part of the inhabitants quite outnumbered that of the citizens who voted in the Comitia, and constituted the source of authority. There was the whole body of slaves, who neither were nor could be represented, being considered by the law as no farther capable of political or legal rights, than a herd of so many cattle; and there were the numerous and extensive dominions, over which, under the name of auxiliaries, Rome exercised a right of absolute sovereignty. In fact, the so called democracy was rather an oligarchy, dispersed more widely than usual, and vesting the government of an immense empire in a certain limited number of the inhabitants of Rome

called citizens, bearing a very small proportion in bulk to the gross number of the inhabitants. These privileged persons in some degree lived upon their votes;—the ambitious caressed them, fed them, caught their eyes with magnificent exhibitions, and their ears with extravagant eloquence, and by corrupting their principles, at last united the small class of privileged citizens themselves, under the very bondage in which they had long kept their extensive empire. There is no one period of the Roman republic, in which it can be said, considering the number of the persons governed relatively to those who had as citizens a share of that government by vote, or capacity of bearing office, that the people, as a whole, were fairly and fully represented.

All other republics of which we have any distinct account, including the celebrated states of Greece, were of so small a size, that it was by no means difficult to consult the citizens to a considerable extent in the affairs of the state. Still this right of being consulted was retained among the free citizens of Greece. Slaves, who amounted to a very large proportion of the inhabitants, were never permitted any interference there, more than in Rome. Now, as it was by slaves that the coarser, more debasing, and more sordid parts of the labour of the community were performed, there were thus excluded from the privilege of citizens

almost all those, who, by constant toil, and by the sordid character of the employments to which their fate condemned them, might be supposed incapable of exercising political rights with due feelings of reflection and of independence. It is not too much to say, in conclusion, that excepting in the earliest stage of human society, there never existed a community, in which was to be found that liberty and equality, which the French claimed for each individual in the whole extent of their empire.

Not only the difficulty or impossibility of assigning to every person in France an equal portion of political power, was one against which antiquity had never attempted to struggle, but the wealth and size of the late French empire were circumstances which experience induced wise statesmen to conclude against the favourable issue of the experiment. These memorable republics, which Montesquieu compliments* with being formed upon *virtue*, as the leading principle, inhabited the modest and sequestered habitations where virtue is most often found. In mountainous countries like that of the Swiss, where the inhabitants are nearly of the same rank, and not very much disproportioned in substance, and where they inhabit a small district or territory, a republic seems the most natural form of government. Nature has to a certain extent established an equality among the fathers of

such a society, and there is no reason why policy should supplant it. In their public meetings, they come together upon the same general footing, and possess nearly the same opportunity of forming a judgment; and the affairs of such a state are too simple, and too little complicated, to require frequent or prolonged discussions. The same applies to small states, like Geneva and some of the Dutch provinces, where the inequality of wealth, if it exists in some instances, is qualified by the consideration, that it is gained in the same honourable pursuit or mercantile traffic, where all fortunes are founded on the same commercial system, and where the chance that has made one man rich yesterday may to-morrow depress him and raise another. Under such favourable circumstances, republics may exist long and happily, providing they can prevent luxury from working the secret dissolution of their moral principles, or the exterior force of more powerful neighbours from swallowing up their little community in the rage of conquest.

America must certainly be accounted a successful attempt to establish a republic on a much larger scale than those we have mentioned. But that great and flourishing empire consists, it must be remembered, of a federative union of many states, which, though extensive in territory, are comparatively thin in

occupants. There do not exist in America, in the same degree, those circumstances of a dense and degraded population, which occasion in the old nations of Europe such an infinite difference of knowledge and ignorance, of wealth the most exuberant, and indigence the most horrible. No man in America need be poor, if he has a hatchet and arms to use it. The wilderness is to him the same retreat which the world afforded to our first parents. His family, if he has one, is wealth; if he is unencumbered with wife or children, he is the more easily provided for. A man who wishes to make a large fortune, may be disappointed in America; but he who seeks, with a moderate degree of industry, but the wants which nature demands, is certain to find them. An immense proportion of the population of the United States consists of agriculturists, who live upon their own property, which is generally of moderate extent, and cultivate it by their own labour. Such a situation is peculiarly favourable to republican habits. The man who feels himself really independent,—and so must each American who can use a spade or an axe,—will please himself with the mere exertion of his free-will, and form a strong contrast to the hollowing, bawling, blustering rabble of a city, where a dram of liquor, or the money to buy a meal, is sure to purchase the acclamation of thousands, whose situation in

the scale of society is too low to permit their thinking of their political right as a thing more valuable than to be bartered against the degree of advantage they may procure, or of license which they may exercise, by placing it at the disposal of one candidate or another.

Above all, before considering the case of America as parallel with that of France, the statesmen of the latter country should have observed one great and radical difference. In America, after the great change in their system had been effected by shaking off the sovereignty of the mother country, the States arranged their new government so as to make the least possible alteration in the habits of their people. They left to future and more convenient opportunity what farther innovations this great change might render necessary, being more desirous to fix the general outlines of a firm and orderly government, although containing some anomalies, than to cast all existing authorities loose, in order that they might produce a constitution more regular in theory, but far less likely to be put into effectual execution, than those old forms under which the people had grown up, and to which they were accustomed to render regular obedience. They abolished no nobility, for they had none in the Colonies to abolish; but in fixing the basis of their constitution, they balanced the force and impulse of the represent-

ative body of the States by a Senate, designed to serve the purposes answered by the House of Lords in the British Constitution. The governors of the different States also, in whose power the executive government of each was reposed, continued to exercise the same duties as before, without much other change, than that they were named by their fellow-citizens, instead of being appointed by the sovereign of the mother country. The Congress exercised the rights which success had given them over the loyalists, with as much temperance as could be expected after the rage of a civil war. Above all, the mass of the American population was in a sound healthy state, and well fitted to bear their share in the exercise of political rights. They were independent, as we have noticed, and had comparatively few instances amongst them of great wealth, contrasted with the most degrading indigence. They were deeply imbued with a sense of religion, and the morality which is its fruit. They had been brought up under a free government, and in the exercise of the rights of freemen; and their fancies were not liable to be excited, or their understandings made giddy, with a sudden elevation to privileges, the nature of which was unknown to them. The republic of America, moreover, did not consist of one huge and populous country, with an overgrown capital, where the Legislative Body, cooped up in its precincts

like prisoners, were liable to be acted upon by the applauses or threats of a desperate rabble. Each state of America carries on its own immediate government, and enjoys unmolested the privilege of adopting such plans as are best suited to their own peculiar situation, without embarrassing themselves with that ideal uniformity, that universal equality of rights which it was the vain object of the French Constituent Assembly to establish. The Americans know that the advantage of a constitution, like that of a garment, consists neither in the peculiarity of the fashion, nor in the fineness of the texture, but in its being well adapted to the person who receives protection from it. In short, the sagacity of Washington was not more apparent in his military exploits, than in the manly and wise pause which he made in the march of revolution, so soon as peace gave an opportunity to interrupt its impulse. To replace law and social order upon an established basis, was as much the object of this great general, as it seems to have been that of the statesmen of Paris, civilians as they were, to protract a period of insurrection, murder, and revolutionary tyranny.

To such peculiarities and advantages as those we have above stated, France opposed a direct contrast. Not only was the exorbitant influence of such a capital as Paris a bar to the existence of that republican virtue which is the

essence of a popular form of government, but there was nothing like fixed or settled principles in the minds of the people of France at large. Every thing had, within the last few years, been studiously and industriously altered, from the most solemn rites of the Church of Rome, to the most trifling article of dress; from the sacrament of the mass to the fashion of a shoe-tie. Religion was entirely out of the question, and the very slightest vestiges of an established church were about to be demolished. Republican virtue (with the exception of that of the soldiers, whose valour did honour to the name) consisted in wearing a coarse dress and foul linen, swearing the most vulgar oaths, obeying without scruple the most villanous mandates of the Jacobin Club, and assuming the title, manner, and sentiments of a real sans-culotte. The country was besides divided into an infinite variety of factions, and threatened with the plague of civil war. The streets of the metropolis had been lately the scene of a desperate conflict, and yet more recently of a horrible massacre. On the frontiers, the country was pressed by armies of invaders. It was a crisis in which the Romans, with all their love of freedom, would have called in the assistance of a Dictator; yet it was then, when, without regarding either the real wants of the country, or the temper of its inhabitants, France was erected into a Republic,

a species of government the most inconsistent with energetic, secret, and successful councils.

These considerations could not have escaped the Girondists. Neither could they be blind to the fact, that each republic, whatever its pretensions to freedom, has committed to some high officer of the state, under the name of Doge, Stadtholder, President, or other title, the custody of the executive power; from the obvious and undeniable principle, that, with safety to freedom, it cannot be lodged in the hands of the Legislative Body. But knowing this to be the case, they dared not even hint that such a separation of powers was indispensable, aware that their fierce enemies, the Jacobins, while they would have seized on the office without scruple, would, with the other hand, sign an accusation of *lèse-nation* against them for proposing it. Thus crude, raw, and ill-considered, did one of the most important changes that could be wrought upon a country pass as hastily through this Legislative Body as the change of a decoration in the theatre.

The alteration was, notwithstanding, hailed by the community at large, as the consummation of the high fortunes to which France was called. True, half Europe was in arms at her gates—but the nation who opposed their swords to them were become republicans. True, the most frightful disorder had stalked abroad, in

the shape of armed slaughter—it was but the effervescence and delirium of a republican consciousness of freedom. Peculation had crept into the finance, and theft had fingered the diamonds of the state—but the name of a republic was of itself sufficient to restore to the blackest Jacobin of the gang, the moral virtues of a Cincinnatus. The mere word *Republic* was now the universal medicine for all evils which France could complain of, and its regenerating operations were looked for with as much faith and confidence, as if the salutary effects of the convocation of the Estates of the Kingdom, once worshipped as a panacea with similar expectations, had not deceived the hopes of the country.

Meantime, the actors in the new drama began to play the part of Romans with the most ludicrous solemnity. The name of citizen was now the universal salutation to all classes; even when a deputy spoke to a shoe-black, that fond symbol of equality was regularly exchanged betwixt them; and, in the ordinary intercourse of society, there was the most ludicrous affectation of republican brevity and simplicity. « When you conquer Brussels, » said Collot d'Herbois, the actor, to General Dumourier, « my wife, who is in that city, has my permission to reward you with a kiss. » The general was ungallant enough not to profit by this flattering permission. His quick wit caught the

ridicule of such an ejaculation as that which Camus addressed to him : « Citizen General,» said the deputy, « thou dost meditate the part of Cæsar; but remember I will be Brutus, and plunge a poniard in your bosom.»—«My dear Camus,» said the lively soldier, who had been in worse dangers than were involved in this classical threat, «I am no more like Cæsar than you are like Brutus; and an assurance that I should live till you kill me, would be equal to a brevet of immortality.»

With a similar assumption of republican dignity, men graced their children, baptized or unbaptized, with the formidable names of Roman heroes, and the folly of Anacharsis Klootz seemed to become general throughout the nation.

Republican virtues were of course adopted or affected. The duty of mothers nursing their own children, so eloquently insisted on by Rousseau, and nevertheless so difficult to practise under the forms of modern life, was generally adopted in Paris; and as the ladies had no idea that this process of parental attention was to interfere with the usual round of entertainment, mothers, with their infants dressed in the most approved Roman costume, were to be seen at the theatre, with the little disastrous victims of republican affectation, whose wailings, as well as other embarrassments occasioned by their presence, formed

sometimes disagreeable interruptions to the amusements of the evening, and placed the inexperienced matrons in an awkward situation.

These were follies to be laughed at. But when men read Livy, for the sake of discovering what degree of private crime might be committed under the mask of public virtue, the affair became more serious. The deed of the younger Brutus served any man as an apology to betray to ruin and to death a friend, or a patron, whose patriotism might not be of the pitch which suited the time. Under the example of the elder Brutus, the nearest ties of blood were repeatedly made to give way before the ferocity of party zeal—a zeal too often assumed for the most infamous and selfish purposes. As some fanatics of yore studied the Old Testament for the purpose of finding examples of bad actions to vindicate those which themselves were tempted to commit, so the republicans of France, we mean the desperate and outrageous bigots of the Revolution, read history, to justify, by classical instances, thoir public and private crimes. Informers, those scourges of a state, were encouraged to a degree scarce known in ancient Rome in the time of the Emperors, though Tacitus has hurled his thunders against them, as the poison and pest of his time. The duty of lodging such informations was unblushingly

urged as indispensable. The safety of the Republic being the supreme charge of every citizen, he was on no account to hesitate in *denouncing*, as it was termed, any one whomsoever, or howsoever connected with him,—the friend of his counsels, or the wife of his bosom —providing he had reason to suspect the devoted individual of the crime of *incivism*,—a crime the more mysteriously dreadful, that no one knew exactly its nature.

The virtue, even of comparatively good men, gave way under the temptations held out by these fearful innovations on the state of morals. The Girondists themselves did not scruple to avail themselves of the villany of others, when what they called the cause of the country, in reality that of their own faction, could be essentially served by it; but it was reserved for the Jacobins to carry to the most hideous extremity the principle which made an exclusive idol of patriotism, and demanded that every other virtue, as well as the most tender and honourable dictates of feeling and conscience, should be offered up at the shrine of the Republic, as children were of old made to pass through the fire to Moloch.

Another eruption of republican zeal was directed against the antiquities, and fine arts of France. The name of King being pronounced detestable, all the remembrances of royalty were to be destroyed. This task was com-

mitted to the rabble; and although a work dishonourable to their employers, and highly detrimental both to history and the fine arts, it was nevertheless infinitely more harmless than those in which the same agents had been lately employed. The royal sepulchres at Saint Denis, near Paris, the ancient cemetery of the Bourbons, the Valois, and all the long line of French monarchs, were not only defaced on the outside, but utterly broken down, the bodies exposed, the bones dispersed, and the poor remains, even of Henry IV. of Navarre, so long the idol of the French nation, exposed to the rude gaze, and irreverent grasp, of the banditti who committed the sacrilege.

Le Noir, an artist, had the courage to interpose for preventing the total dispersion of the materials of those monuments, so valuable to history and to literature. He procured, with difficulty, permission to preserve and collect them in a house and garden in the *Rue des Petits Augustins*, where their mutilated remains continued in safety till after the Restoration of the Bourbons. The enterprise was accomplished at much personal risk; for if the people he had to deal with had suspected that the zeal which he testified for the preservation of the monuments, was rather that of a royalist than of an antiquary, his idolatry would have been punished by instant death.

But the demolition of those ancient and

sacred monuments was comparatively a trivial mode of showing hatred to royalty. The vengeance of the Republicans was directed against the emigrants, who, armed or unarmed, or from whatever cause they were absent from France, were now to be at once confounded in a general set of decrees. 1. All emigrants taken in arms were to suffer death within twenty-four hours. 2. Foreigners who had quitted the service of France since the 14th July 1789, were, contrary to the law of nations, subjected to the same penalty. 3. All emigrants who had sought refuge in foreign parts, were banished for ever from their native country, without any distinction, or inquiry into the cause of their absence. The effects of these unfortunate exiles were already under sequestration, and by the assignats which were issued on the strength of this spoliation, Cambon, who managed the finances, carried on the war, and supplied the expenses of government.

The emigrants who had fled abroad were not more severely treated than those supposed to share their sentiments who had remained at home. Persons suspected, from whatever cause, or denounced by private malice as disinclined to the new system, were piled anew into the prisons, which had been emptied on the 2d and 3d of September, and where the blood of their predecessors in misfortune was yet visible on the walls. The refractory priests

were particularly the objects of this species of oppression, and at length a summary decree was made for transporting them in the mass from the land of France to the unhealthy colony of Guiana, in South America. Many of these unfortunate men came to a more speedy fate.

But the most august victims destined to be sacrificed at the altar of republican virtue were the royal family in the Temple, whose continuing in existence seemed, doubtless, to the leaders, a daily reproach to their procrastination, and an object to which, when the present spirit should abate, the affections of the bewildered people might return with a sort of reaction. The Jacobins resolved that Louis should die, were it only that the world might see they were not ashamed to attest, with a bloody seal, the truth of the accusations they had brought against him.

On the other hand, there was every reason to hope that the Girondists would exert, in protection of the unhappy prince, whatever vigour they derived from their predominating influence in the Convention. They were, most of them, men, whose philosophy, though it had driven them on wild political speculations, had not destroyed the sense of moral right and wrong, especially now that the struggle was ended betwixt monarchy and democracy, and the only question remaining concerned the use to be made of their victory. Although

they had aided the attack on the Tuileries, on the 10th of August, which they considered as a combat, their hands were unstained with the massacres of September; which, as we shall presently see, they urged as an atrocious crime against their rivals, the Jacobins. Besides, they had gained the prize, and were in possession of the government; and, like the Constitutionalists before them, the Girondists now desired that here, at length, the revolutionary career should terminate, and that the ordinary forms of law and justice should resume their usual channels through France, yielding to the people protection for life, personal liberty, and private property, and affording themselves, who held the reins of government, the means of guiding them honourably, safely, and with advantage to the community.

The philosophical statesmen, upon whom these considerations were not lost, felt nevertheless great embarrassment in the mode of interposing their protection in the King's favour. Their republicanism was the feature on which they most prided themselves. They delighted to claim the share in the downfall of Louis, which was due to their colleague Barbaroux, and the Federates of Marseilles and Brest. It was upon their accession to this deed that the Girondists rested their claims to popularity; and with what front could they now step forward the defenders, at the least

the apologists, of the King whom they had aided to dethrone; or what advantages would not the Jacobins obtain over them, when they represented them to the people as lukewarm in their zeal, and as falling off from the popular cause, in order to preserve the life of the dethroned tyrant? The Girondist ministers felt these embarrassments, and suffered themselves to be intimidated by them from making any open, manly, and direct interference in the King's cause.

A woman, and, although a woman, not the least distinguished among the Girondist party, had the courage to urge a decisive and vigorous defence of the unhappy Prince, without having recourse to the veil of a selfish and insidious policy. This was the wife of Roland, one of the most remarkable women of her time. A worthless, at least a careless father, and the doating folly of her mother, had left her when young to pick out such an education as she could, among the indecencies and impieties of French philosophy. Yet, though her Memoirs afford revolting specimens of indelicacy, and exaggerated sentiments in politics, it cannot be denied that the tenor of her life was innocent and virtuous in practice, and her sentiments unperverted, when left to their natural course. She saw the great question in its true and real position; she saw, that it was only by interposing themselves betwixt the

Legislative Body of France and the commission of a great crime, that the Girondists could either remain firm in the government, attract the confidence of honest men of any description, or have the least chance of putting a period to the anarchy which was devouring their country. « Save the life of Louis,» she said; « save him by an open and avowed defence. It is the only measure that can assure your safety—the only course which can fix the stamp of public virtue on your government.» Those whom she addressed listened with admiration; but, like one who has rashly climbed to a height where his brain grows giddy, they felt their own situation too tottering to permit their reaching a willing hand to support another. who was in still more imminent peril.

Their condition was indeed precarious. A large party in the Convention avowedly supported them; and in *the Plain*, as it was called, a position held by deputies affecting independence, both of the Girondists and the Jacobins, and therefore occupying the neutral ground betwixt them, sate a large number, who, from the timidity of temper which makes sheep and other weak animals herd together in numbers, had formed themselves into a faction, which could at any time cast decision into either scale which they favoured. But they exercised this power of inclining the

balance, less with a view to carrying any political point, than with that of securing their own safety. In ordinary debates, they usually gave their votes to the ministers, both because they *were* ministers, and also because the milder sentiments of the Girondists were more congenial to the feelings of men, who would gladly have seen peace and order restored. But then these timid members of the Plain also assiduously courted the Jacobins, avoided joining in any measure which should give them mortal offence, and purchased a sort of immunity from their revenge, by showing plainly that they deserved only contempt. In this neutral party the gleanings of the defeated factions of Moderates and of Constitutionalists were chiefly to be found; resigning themselves to the circumstances of the moment, consulting their own safety as they gave their votes, and waiting, perhaps, till less disorderly days might restore to them the privilege of expressing their actual sentiments. The chief of these trucklers to fortune was Barrère, a man of wit and eloquence, prompt invention, supple opinions, and convenient conscience. His terror of the Jacobins was great, and his mode of disarming their resentment, so far as he and the neutral party were concerned, was often very ingenious. When by argument or by eloquence the Girondists had obtained some triumph in

the Assembly, which seemed to reduce their adversaries to despair, "it was then Barrère, and the members of the Plain, threw themselves between the victors and vanquished, and, by some proposal of an insidious and neutralizing nature, prevented the completion of the conquest, and afforded a safe retreat to the defeated.

The majorities, therefore, which the Girondists obtained in the Assembly, being partly eked out by this heartless and fluctuating band of auxiliaries, could never be supposed to arm them with solid or effective authority. It was absolutely necessary that they should exhibit such a power of protecting themselves and those who should join them, as might plainly show that the force was on their side. This point once established, they might reckon Barrère and his party as faithful adherents. But while the Jacobins retained the power of surrounding the Convention at their pleasure with an insurrection of the suburbs, without the deputies possessing other means of defence than arose out of their inviolability, the adherence of those whose chief object in voting was to secure their personal safety, was neither to be hoped nor expected. The Girondists, therefore, looked anxiously round, to secure, if it were possible, the possession of such a force, to protect themselves and their timorous allies.

It has been thought, that a more active, more artful body of ministers, and who were better acquainted with the mode of carrying on revolutionary movements, might at this period have secured an important auxiliary, by detaching the formidable Danton from the ranks of the enemy, and receiving him into their own It must be observed, that the camp of the Jacobins contained three separate parties, led each by one of the triumvirs whom we have already described, and acting in concert, for the common purpose of propelling the Revolution by the same violent means which had begun it—of unsheathing the sword of terror, and making it pass for that of justice—and, in the name of liberty, of letting murder and spoil, under the protection of armed ruffians of the basest condition, continue to waste and ravage the departments of France. But although agreed in this main object, the triumvirs were extremely suspicious of each other, and jealous of the rights each might claim in the spoil which they contemplated. Danton despised Robespierre for his cowardice, Robespierre feared the ferocious audacity of Danton; and with him to fear was to hate—and to hate was—when the hour arrived—to destroy. They differed in their ideas also of the mode of exercising their terrible system of government. Danton had often in his mouth the sentence of Machiavel, that when it becomes necessary

to shed blood, a single great massacre has a more dreadful effect than a series of successive executions. Robespierre, on the contrary, preferred the latter process as the best way of sustaining the reign of terror. The appetite of Marat could not be satiated but by combining both modes of murder. Both Danton and Robespierre kept aloof from the sanguinary Marat. This position of the chiefs of the Jacobins towards each other seemed to indicate, that one of the three at least might be detached from the rest, and might bring his ruffians in opposition to those of his late comrades, in case of any attempt on the Assembly, and policy recommended Danton, not averse, it is said, to the alliance, as the most useful auxiliary

Among the three monsters mentioned, Danton had that energy which the Girondists wanted, and was well acquainted with the secret movements of those insurrections to which they possessed no key. His vices of wrath, luxury, love of spoil, dreadful as they were, are attributes of mortal men;—the envy of Robespierre, and the instinctive blood-thirstiness of Marat, were the properties of fiends. Danton, like the huge serpent called the Boa, might be approached with a degree of safety when gorged with prey—but the appetite of Marat for blood was like the horse-leech, which says, Not enough—and the slaughterous envy of

Robespierre was like the gnawing worm that dieth not, and yields no interval of repose. In glutting Danton with spoil, and furnishing the means of indulging his luxury, the Girondists might have purchased his support; but nothing under the supreme rule in France would have gratified Robespierre; and an unlimited torrent of the blood of that unhappy country could alone have satiated Marat. If a colleague was to be chosen out of that detestable triumvirate, unquestionably Danton was to be considered as the most eligible.

On the other hand, men like Brissot, Vergniaud, and others, whose attachment to republicanism was mixed with a spirit of virtue and honour, might be well adverse to the idea of contaminating their party with such an auxiliary, intensely stained as Danton was by his share in the massacres of September. They might well doubt, whether any physical force which his revolutionary skill, and the arms it could put in motion, might bring to their standard, would compensate for the moral horror with which the presence of such a grisly proselyte must strike all who had any sense of honour or justice. They, therefore, discouraged the advances of Danton, and resolved to comprise him with Marat and Robespierre in the impeachment against the Jacobin chiefs, which they designed to bring forward in the Assembly.

The most obvious means by which the Girondists could ascertain their safety, and the freedom of debate, was by levying a force from the several departments, each contributing its quota, to be called a Departmental Legion, which was to be armed and paid to act as a guard upon the National Convention. The subject was introduced by Roland in a report[1] to the Assembly, and renewed on the next day by Kersaint, a spirited Girondist, who candidly declared the purpose of his motion. « It was time, » he said, « that assassins and their prompters should see that the law had scaffolds. »

The Girondists obtained, that a committee of six members should be named, to report on the state of the capital, on the encouragement afforded to massacre, and on the mode of forming a departmental force for the defence of the metropolis. The decree was carried for a moment, but on the next day the Jacobins demanded that it should be revoked, denying that there was any occasion for such a defence to the Convention, and accusing the ministers of an intention to surround themselves with a force of armed satellites, in order to overawe the good city of Paris, and carry into effect their sacrilegious plan of dismembering France. Rebecqui and Barbaroux replied to this charge

[1] 24th September.

by impeaching Robespierre, on their own testimony, of aspiring to the post of Dictator. The debate became more tempestuous the more that the tribunes or galleries of the hall were filled with the violent followers of the Jacobin party, who shouted, cursed, and yelled, to back the exclamations and threats of their leaders in the Assembly. While the Girondists were exhausting themselves to find out terms of reproach for Marat, that prodigy stepped forth, and raised the disorder to the highest, by avowing himself the author and advocate for a dictatorship. The anger of the Convention seemed thoroughly awakened, and Vergniaud read to the deputies an extract from Marat's journal, in which, after demanding one hundred and sixty thousand heads, which was his usual stint, he abused the Convention in the grossest terms, and exhorted the people TO ACT—words of which the import was by this time perfectly understood.

This passage excited general horror, and the victory for a moment seemed in the hands of the Girondists; but they did not pursue it with sufficient vigour. The meeting passed to the order of the day; and Marat, in ostentatious triumph, produced a pistol, with which he said he would have blown out his brains, had a decree of accusation been passed against him. The Girondists not only lost the advantage of discomfiting their enemies by the pro-

secution of one of their most noted leaders, but were compelled for the present to abandon their plan of a departmental guard, and resign themselves to the guardianship of the faithful citizens of Paris.

This city of Paris was at the time under the power of the intrusive Community (or Common Council), many of whom had forced themselves into office on the 10th of August. It was the first act of their administration to procure the assassination of Mandat, the commandant of the National Guard; and their accompts, still extant, bear testimony that it was by their instrumentality that the murderers of September were levied and paid. Trained Jacobins and pitiless ruffians themselves, this civic body had raised to be their agents and assistants an unusual number of municipal officers, who were at once their guards, their informers, their spies, their jailers, and their executioners. They had, besides, obtained a majority of the inhabitants in most of the sections, whose votes placed them and their agents in command of the National Guard, and the pikemen of the suburbs were always ready to second their excellent Community, even against the Convention itself, which, in point of freedom of action, or effective power, made a figure scarcely more respectable than that of the King after his return from Varennes.

Roland almost every day carried to the Convention his vain complaints, that the course of the law, for which he was responsible, was daily crossed, thwarted, and impeded, by the proceedings of this usurping body. The considerable funds of the city itself, with those of its hospitals and other public establishments of every kind, were dilapidated by these revolutionary intruders, and applied to their own purposes. The minister at length, in a formal report to the Convention, inculpated the Community in these and such like offences. In another part of the report, he intimated a plot of the Jacobins to assassinate the Girondists, possess themselves of the government by arms, and chuse Robespierre dictator. Louvet denounced Robespierre as a traitor, and Barbaroux proposed a series of decrees. The first, declaring the Convention free to leave any city where they should be exposed to constraint and violence. The second, resolving to form a Conventional guard. The third, declaring that the Convention should form itself into a court of justice, for trial of state crimes. The fourth announcing, that in respect the sections of Paris had declared their sittings permanent, that resolution should be abrogated.

Instead of adopting the energetic measures proposed by Barbaroux, the Convention allowed Robespierre several days for his defence

against Louvet's accusation, and ordered to the bar[1] ten members of the community, from whom they were contented to accept such slight apologies and evasive excuses, for their unauthorized interference with the power of the Convention, as these insolent demagogues condescended to offer.

The accusation of Robespierre, though boldly urged by Louvet and Barbaroux, was also eluded, by passing to the order of the day, and thus the Convention showed plainly, that however courageous they had been against their monarch, they dared not protect the liberty which they boasted of, against the encroachments of fiercer demagogues than themselves.

Barbaroux endeavoured to embolden the Assembly, by bringing once more from his native city a body of those fiery Marseillois, who had formed the van-guard of the mob on the 10th of August. He succeeded so far in his scheme that a few scores of those Federates again appeared in Paris, where their altered demeanour excited surprise. Then songs were again chaunted, their wild Moresco dances and gestures again surprised the Parisians; and the more, as in their choruses they imprecated vengeance on the Jacobins, called out for mercy to the « poor tyrant, » so

[1] 5th November.

they termed the King, and shouted in the cause of peace, order, and the Convention.

The citizens of Paris, who could not reconcile the songs and exclamations of the Marseillois with their appearance and character, concluded that a snare was laid for them, and abstained from uniting themselves with men whose sincerity was so suspicious. The Marseillois themselves, discouraged with their cold reception, or not liking their new trade of maintaining order so well as their old one of oversetting it, melted away by degrees, and were soon no more seen or heard of. Some of the Breton Federates, kept in the interest of the Girondists, by their countrymen the deputies Kersaint and Kervclagan, remained still attached to the Convention, though their numbers were too few to afford them protection in any general danger.

If the Memoirs of Dumourier are to be relied on, that active and intriguing general presented to the Girondists another resource, not free certainly from hazard or difficulty to the republican government, which was the idol of these theoretical statesmen, but affording, if his means had proved adequate to the execution of his plans, a certain bulwark against the encroachments of the hideous anarchy threatened by the Jacobin ascendancy.

General Dumourier was sufficiently hated

by the Jacobins, notwithstanding the successes which he had gained on the part of France over foreign enemies, to induce him to feel the utmost desire of putting down their usurped power; but he was under the necessity of acting with great caution. The bad success of La Fayette, deserted by his army as soon as he attempted to lead them against Paris, was in itself discouraging; but Dumourier was besides conscious that the Jacobin clubs, together with the commissioners of the Convention with Danton at their head, had been actively engaged in disorganizing his army, and diminishing his influence over them. Thus circumstanced, he naturally resolved to avoid hazarding any violent measure without the support of the Convention, in case of being deserted by his army. But he affirms that he repeatedly informed the Girondists, then predominant in the Assembly, that if they could obtain a decree, but of four lines, authorizing such a measure, he was ready to march to Paris at the head of a chosen body of troops, who would have been willing to obey such a summons; and that he would by this means have placed the Convention in a situation, when they might have set the Jacobins and their insurrectionary forces at absolute defiance.

Perhaps the Girondists entertained the fear, first, that Dumourier's influence with his troops

might prove as inefficient as that of La Fayette, and leave them to atone with their heads for such a measure attempted and unexecuted. Or, secondly, that if the manœuvre proved successful, they would be freed from fear of the Jacobins, only to be placed under the restraint of a military chief, whose mind was well understood to be in favour of monarchy of one kind or other. So that, conceiving they saw equal risk in the alternative, they preferred the hazard of seeing their fair and favourite vision of a Republic overthrown by the pikes of the Jacobins, rather than by the bayonets of Dumourier's army. They turned, therefore, a cold ear to the proposal, which afterwards they would gladly have accepted, when the general had no longer the power to carry it into execution.

Thus the factions, so intimately united for the destruction of royalty, could not, when that step was gained, combine for any other purpose save the great crime of murdering their deposed sovereign. Nay, while the Jacobins and Girondists seemed moving hand in hand to the ultimate completion of that joint undertaking, the union was only in outward appearance; for the Girondists, though apparently acting in concert with their stern rivals, were in fact dragged after them by compulsion, and played the part less of actors than subdued captives in this final triumph of de-

mocracy. They were fully persuaded of the King's innocence as a man, of his inviolability and exemption from criminal process as a constitutional authority. They were aware that the deed meditated would render France odious to all the other nations of Europe; and that the Jacobins, to whom war and confusion were natural elements, were desirous for that very reason to bring Louis to the scaffold. All this was plain to them, and yet their pride as philosophers made them ashamed to be thought capable of interesting themselves in the fate of a tyrant; and their desire of getting the French nation under their own exclusive government, induced them to consent to anything rather than protect the obnoxious though innocent sovereign, at the hazard of losing their popularity, and forfeiting their dearly-won character of being true Republicans.

A committee of twenty-four persons had been appointed early in the Session of the Convention, to inquire into, and report upon, the grounds for accusing Louis. Their report was brought up on the 1st of November 1792, and a more loathsome tissue of confusion and falsehood never was laid upon the table of such an Assembly. All acts that had been done by the ministers in every department, which could be twisted into such a shape as the times called criminal, were charged as deeds, for which the sovereign was him-

self responsible; and the burthen of the whole was to accuse the King, when he had scarcely a single regiment of guards even at his nominal disposal, of nourishing the intention of massacring the Convention, defended by thirty thousand National Guards, besides the Federates, and the militia of the suburbs.

The Convention were rather ashamed of this report, and would scarce permit it to be printed. So soon as it appeared, two or three persons, who were therein mentioned as accomplices of particular acts charged against the King, contradicted the report upon their oath.[1] An additional charge was brought under the following mysterious circumstances :—Ga min, a locksmith of Versailles, communicated to Roland about the latter end of December, that in the beginning of May 1792, he had been employed by the King to secrete an iron-chest, or cabinet, in the wall of a certain apartment in the Tuileries, which he disclosed to the ministers of justice. He added a circumstance which throws discredit on his whole story, namely, that the King gave him with his own hand a glass of wine, after taking which he was seized with a cholic, followed by a kind of paralysis, which deprived him for *fourteen*

[1] Monsieur de Septeuil, in particular, quoted as being the agent by whom Louis XVI. was said to have transmitted money to his brothers when in exile, positively denied the fact, and made affidavit accordingly.

months of the use of his limbs, and the power of working for his bread. The inference of the wretch was, that the King had attempted to poison him; which those may believe who can number fourteen months betwixt the beginning of May and the end of December in the same year. This gross falsehood utterly destroys Gamin's evidence; and as the King always denied his knowledge of the existence of such a chest with such papers, we are reduced to suppose, either that Gamin had been employed by one of the royal ministers, and had brought the King personally into the tale for the greater grace of his story, or that the papers found in some other place of safety had been selected, and put into the chest by the Jacobin commissioners, then employed in surveying and searching the palace, with the purpose of trumping up evidence against the King.

Roland acted very imprudently in examining the contents of the chest alone and without witness, instead of calling in the commissioners aforesaid, who were in the palace at the time. This was perhaps done with the object of putting aside such papers as might, in that hour of fear and uncertainty, have brought into danger some of his own party or friends. One of importance, however, was found, which the Jacobins turned into an implement against the Girondists. It was an overture from that

party addressed to the King, shortly before the 10th of August, engaging to oppose the motion for the forfeiture of the King, providing Louis would recal to his councils the three discarded ministers of their faction.

The contents of the chest were of a very miscellaneous nature. The documents consisted of letters, memorials, and plans, from different persons, and at different dates, offering advice, or tendering support to the King, and proposing plans for the freedom of his person. The Royalist project of Mirabeau, in his latter days, was found amongst the rest; in consequence of which his body was dragged out of the Panthéon, formerly the Church of Saint Geneviève, now destined to receive the bodies of the great men of the Revolution, but whose lodgings shifted as often as if they had been taken by the month.

The documents, as we have said, consisted chiefly of projects for the King's service, on which he certainly never acted, probably never approved of, and perhaps never saw. The utmost to which he could be liable, was such penalty as may be due to one who retains possession of plans submitted to his consideration, but which have in no shape obtained his assent. It was sufficiently hard to account Louis responsible for such advice of his ministers as he really adopted; but it was a dreadful extension of his responsibility to make him

answerable for such as he had virtually rejected. Besides which, the story of Gamin was so self-contradictory in one circumstance, and so doubtful in others, as to carry no available proof that the papers had been in the King's possession; so that this new charge was as groundless as those brought up by the first committee, and, arguing upon the known law of any civilized country, the accusations against him ought to have been dismissed, as founded on the most notorious injustice.

There was one circumstance which probably urged those into whose hands Louis had fallen, to proceed against his person to the uttermost. They knew that, in English history, a king had been condemned to death by his subjects, and were resolved that France should not remain behind England in the exhibition of a spectacle so interesting and edifying to a people newly regenerated. This parallel case would not perhaps have been thought a worthy precedent in other countries; but in France there is a spirit of wild enthusiasm, a desire of following out an example even to the most exaggerated point, and of outdoing, if possible, what other nations have done before them. This had doubtless its influence in causing Louis to be brought to the bar in 1793, like Charles of England in 1648.

The French statesmen did not pause to reflect, that the violent death of Charles only

paved the way for a series of years spent in servitude under military despotism, and then to restoration of the legitimate sovereign. Had they regarded the precedent on this side, they would have obtained a glimpse into futurity, and might have presaged what were to be the consequences of the death of Louis. Neither did the French consider, that by a great part of the English nation the execution of Charles Stuart is regarded as a national crime, and the anniversary still observed as a day of fasting and penitence; that others who condemn the King's conduct in and preceding the Civil War, do, like the Whig Churchill, still consider his death as an unconstitutional action;[1] that the number is small indeed who think it justifiable even on the precarious grounds of state necessity; and that it is barely

[1] Unhappy Stuart! harshly though that name
Grates on my ear, I should have died with shame,
To see my king before his subjects stand,
And at their bar hold up his royal hand;
At their command to hear the monarch plead,
By their decrees to see that monarch bleed.
What though thy faults were many, and were great—
What though they shook the fabric of the state?
In royalty secure thy person stood,
And sacred was the fountain of thy blood.
Vile ministers, who dared abuse their trust,
Who dared seduce a king to be unjust,
Vengeance, with justice leagued, with power made strong,
Had nobly crush'd—The King can do no wrong.

CHURCHILL'S *Gotham*.

possible a small portion of enthusiasts may still exist, who glory in the deed as an act of popular vengeance.

But even among this last description of persons, the French regicides would find themselves entirely at a loss to vindicate the execution of Louis by the similar fate of Charles; and it would be by courtesy only, if at all, that they could be admitted to the honours of the sitting at a Calves-Head Club.

The comparison between these unhappy monarchs fails in almost every point, excepting in the closing scene; and no parallel can, with justice to either, be drawn betwixt them. The most zealous Cavalier will, in these enlightened days, admit, that the early government of Charles was marked by many efforts to extend the prerogative beyond its legal bounds; that there were instances of oppressive fines, cruel punishments by mutilation, long and severe imprisonment in distant forts and castles; exertions of authority which no one seeks to justify, and which those who are the King's apologists can only endeavour to mitigate, by alleging the precedents of arbitrary times, or the interpretation of the laws by courtly ministers, and time-serving lawyers. The conduct of Louis XVI., from the hour he assumed the throne, was, on the contrary, an example of virtue and moderation. Instead of levying ship-money and benevolences, Louis lightened

the feudal services of the vassals, and the *corvée* among the peasantry. Where Charles endeavoured to enforce conformity to the Church of England by pillory and ear-slitting, Louis allowed the protestants the free use of their religion, and discharged the use of torture in all cases whatever. Where Charles visited his Parliament to violate their freedom by arresting five of their members, Louis may be said to have surrendered himself an unresisting prisoner to the representatives of the people, whom he had voluntarily summoned around him. But above all, Charles, in person, or by his generals, waged a long and bloody war with his subjects, fought battles in every county of England, and was only overcome and made prisoner, after a lengthened and deadly contest, in which many thousands fell on both sides. The conduct of Louis was in every respect different. He never offered one blow in actual resistance, even when he had the means in his power. He ordered up, indeed, the forces under Marshal Broglie; but he gave them command to retire, so soon as it was evident that they must either do so, or act offensively against the people. In the most perilous situations of his life, he showed the utmost reluctance to shed the blood of his subjects. He would not trust his attendants with pistols, during the flight to Varennes; he would not give the officer of hussars orders to

clear the passage, when his carriage was stopped upon the bridge. When he saw that the martial array of the Guards did not check the audacity of the assailants on the 10th of August, he surrendered himself to the Legislative Assembly, a prisoner at discretion, rather than mount his horse and place himself at the head of his faithful troops and subjects. The blood that was shed that day was without command of his. He could have no reason for encouraging such a strife, which, far from defending his person, then in the custody of the Assembly, was likely to place it in the most imminent danger. And in the very last stage, when he received private notice that there were individuals determined to save his life at peril of their own, he forbade the enterprise. «Let not a drop of blood be shed on my account,» he said; «I would not consent to it for the safety of my crown: I never will purchase mere life at such a rate.» These were sentiments perhaps fitter for the pious sectaries of the community of Friends, than for the king of a great nation; but, such as they were, Louis felt and conscientiously acted on them. And yet his subjects could compare his character, and his pretended guilt, with the bold and haughty Stuart, who, in the course of the Civil War, bore arms in person, and charged at the head of his own regiment of Guards!

Viewed in his kingly duty, the conduct of

Louis is equally void of blame; unless it be that blame which attaches to a prince, too yielding and mild to defend the just rights of his crown. He yielded, with feeble struggling, to every demand in succession which was made upon him, and gave way to every inroad on the existing state of France. Instead of placing himself as a barrier between his people and his nobility, and bringing both to some fair terms of composition, he suffered the latter to be driven from his side, and by the ravaging their estates, and the burning of their houses, to be hurried into emigration. He adopted one popular improvement after another, each innovating on the royal authority, or derogatory to the royal dignity. Far from having deserved the charge of opposing the nation's claim of freedom, it would have been well for themselves and him, had he known how to limit his grant to that quantity of freedom which they were qualified to make a legitimate use of; leaving it for future princes to slacken the reins of government, in proportion as the public mind in France should become formed to the habitual exercise of political rights.

The King's perfect innocence was therefore notorious to the whole world, but especially to those who now usurped the title of arraigning him; and men could hardly persuade themselves, that his life was seriously in danger. An ingenious contrivance of the Jacobins

seems to have been intended to drive the wavering Girondists into the snare of voting for the King's trial. Saint Just, one of their number, made a furious speech against any formality being observed, save a decree of death, on the urgency of the occasion. « What availed, » said the supporters of this brief and sure measure, « the ceremonies of Grand and Petty Jury? The cannon which made a breach in the Tuileries, the unanimous shout of the people on the 10th of August, had come in place of all other solemnities. The Convention had no farther power to inquire; its sole duty was to pronounce or rather confirm and execute, the doom of the sovereign people. »

This summary proposal was highly applauded, not only by the furious crowds by whom the galleries were always occupied, but by all the exaggèrations of the more violent democrats. They exclaimed that every citizen had the same right over the life of Louis which Brutus possessed over that of Cæsar. Others cried out, that the very fact of having reigned, was in itself a crime notorions enough to dispense with further investigation, and authorize instant punishment.

Stunned by these clamours, the Girondists and neutral party, like all feeble-minded men, chose a middle course, and, instead of maintaining the King's innocence, adopted measures, calculated to save him indeed from

immediate slaughter, but which ended by consigning him to a tribunal too timid to hear his cause justly. They resolved to urge the right of the National Convention to judge in the case of Louis.

There were none in the Convention that dared to avow facts to which their conscience bore witness, but the consequences of admitting which were ingeniously urged by the sophist Robespierre, as a condemnation of their own conduct. «One party,» said the wily logician, «must be clearly guilty; either the King, or the Convention, who have ratified the actions of the insurgent people. If you have dethroned an innocent and legal monarch, what are you but traitors? and why sit you here—why not hasten to the Temple, set Louis at liberty, instal him again in the Tuileries, and beg on your knees for a pardon you have not merited? But if you have, in the great popular act which you have ratified, only approved of the deposition of a tyrant, summon him to the bar, and demand a reckoning for his crimes.» This dilemma pressed on the mind of many members, who could not but see their own condemnation the necessary consequence of the King's acquittal. And while some felt the force of this argument, all were aware of the obvious danger to be encountered from the wrath of the Jacobins and their satellites, should they dare to dissent

from the vote which these demagogues demanded from the Assembly.

When Robespierre had ended, Pétion arose and moved, that the King should be tried before the Convention. It is said, the Mayor of Paris took the lead in this cruel persecution, because Louis had spoken to him sharply about the tumultuary inroad of the Jacobin rabble into the Tuileries on the 20th of June; and when Pétion attempted to reply, had pointed to the broken grating through which the entrance had been forced, and sternly commanded him to be silent. If this was true, it was a bitter revenge for so slight an offence, and the subsequent fate of Pétion is the less deserving of pity.

The motion was carried without opposition, and the next chapter affords us the melancholy results.

# CHAPTER V.

Indecision of the Girondists and its Effects.—The Royal Family in the Temple—Insulted by the Agents of the Community, both within and without the Prison—Their exemplary Patience—The King deprived of his Son's Society.—Buzot's Admission of the general dislike of France to a Republican Form of Government.—The King brought to Trial before the Convention—His first Examination—Carried back to Prison amidst Insult and Abuse.—Tumult in the Assembly.—The King deprived of Intercourse with his Family.—Malesherbes appointed as Counsel to defend the King—and Desèze.—Louis again brought before the Convention—Opening Speech of Desèze—King remanded to the Temple.—Stormy Debate in the Convention.—Eloquent Attack of Vergniaud on the Jacobins.—Sentence of DEATH pronounced against the King—General Sympathy for his Fate.—Dumourier arrives in Paris—Vainly tries to avert the King's Fate.—LOUIS XVI. BEHEADED ON 21ST JANUARY, 1793—MARIE ANTOINETTE on the 16th October thereafter—The Princess ELIZABETH in May, 1794—The Dauphin perishes, by Cruelty, June 8th, 1795.—The Princess Royal exchanged for Beurnonville and others, 19th December, 1795.

WE have already said, that the vigorous and masculine, as well as virtuous exhortations of Madame Roland, were thrown away upon her

colleagues, whose fears were more than female. The Girondists could not be made to perceive, that, though their ferocious adversaries were feared through France, yet they were also hated. The moral feeling of all Frenchmen who had any left, detested the authors of a long train of the most cold-blooded murders; the suspicions of all men of property were attached to the conduct of a party, whose leaders rose from indigence to affluence by fines, confiscations, sequestrations, besides every other kind of plunder, direct and indirect. If the majority of the Convention had adopted the determination of boldly resisting their unprincipled tyrants, and preventing, at whatever hazard, the murder of the King, the strength of the country would probably have supported a constituted authority against the usurpations of the Community of Paris, which had no better title to tyrannize over the Convention, and by so doing to govern France at pleasure, than had the council of the meanest town in the kingdom.

The Girondists ought to have been sensible, that, even by thwarting this favourite measure, they could not increase the hatred which the Jacobins already entertained against them, and should have known that further delay to give open battle would not be received as an overture of friendship, but be regarded as a timid indecision, which must have heated their ene-

mies, in proportion as it cooled their friends. The truckling, time-serving policy which they observed on this occasion, deprived the Girondists of almost all chance of forming a solid and substantial interest in the country. By a bold, open, and manly defence of the King, they would have done honour to themselves as public men, willing to discharge their duty at the risk of their lives. They would have been sure of whatever number could be gathered, either of royalists, who were beginning to raise a head in Bretagne and La Vendée, or of Constitutionalists, who feared the persecution of the Jacobins. The materials were already kindled for those insurrections, which afterwards broke out at Lyons, Marseilles, Toulon, and generally through the south and west of France. They might have brought up five or six thousand Federates from the departments, and the force would then have been in their own hands. They might, by showing a bold and animated front, have regained possession of the National Guard, which was only prevented by a Jacobin commander and his staff officers, as well as by their timidity, from throwing off a yoke so bloody and odious as that which they were groaning under. But to dare this, it was necessary that they should have the encouragement of the Convention; and that body, managed as it was by the Girondists, showed a

timorous unwillingness to support the measures of the Jacobins, which implied their dislike indeed, but also evinced their fear.

Meantime the King, with the Queen, his sister, and their children, the Dauphin and the Princess Royal, remained in the Tower of the Temple, more uncomfortably lodged, and much more harshly treated, than state prisoners before the Revolution had been in the execrable Bastille.[1] The royal prisoners were under the especial charge of the Community of Paris, who, partly from their gross ignorance, partly from their desire to display their furious Jacobinical zeal, did all in their power to embitter their captivity.

Pétion, whose presence brought with it so many cruel recollections, studiously insulted him by his visits to the prison. The municipal officers, sent thither to insure the custody of the King's person, and to be spies upon his private conversation, were selected among the worst and most malignant Jacobins. His efforts at equanimity, and even civility, towards these brutal jailers, were answered with the most gross insolence. One of them, a mason, in his working dress, had thrown himself into an arm-chair, where, decorated with his municipal scarf, he reposed at his ease. The King

[1] The reader may compare the account which Marmontel gives of his residence in the Bastille, with the faithful Cléry's narrative of Louis's captivity in the Temple.

condescended to ask him, by way of conversation, where he wrought. He answered gruffly, « at the Church of Saint Geneviève. »—« I remember, » said the King, « I laid the foundation stone—a fine edifice; but I have heard the foundation is insecure. » — « It is more sure, » answered the fellow, « than the thrones of tyrants. » The King smiled and was silent. He endured with the same patience the insolent answer of another of these officials. The man not having been relieved at the usual and regular hour, the King civilly expressed his hopes that he would find no inconvenience from the delay. « I am come here, » answered the ruffian, « to watch your conduct, not for you to trouble yourself with mine. No one, » he added, fixing his hat firm on his brow, « least of all you, have any business to concern themselves with it. » We have seen prisons, and are sure that even the steeled jailer, accustomed as he is to scenes of distress, is not in the habit, unprovoked and wantonly, of answering with reproach and insult such ordinary expressions of civility, when offered by the worst criminals. The hearts of these men, who, by chance as it were, became dungeon-keepers, and whose first captive had been many years their King, must have been as hard as the nether millstone.

While such scenes occurred within the prison, those who kept watch without, either as

sentinels or as patroles of the Jacobins (who maintained stern vigilance in the environs of the prison), were equally ready to contribute their share of vexation and insult. Pictures and placards, representing the royal family under the hands of the executioner, were pasted up where the King and Queen might see them. The most violent patriotic songs, turning upon the approaching death of Monsieur and Madame Veto, were sung below their windows, and the most frightful cries for their blood disturbed such rest as prisoners can obtain. The head of the Princess of Lamballe was brought under their window on the 3d September, and one of the municipal officers would have enticed the royal family to the window that they might see this ghastly spectacle, had not the other, « of milder mood, » prevented them from complying. When questioned concerning the names of these two functionaries by some less savage persons, who wished to punish the offending ruffian, Louis would only mention that of the more humane of the two; so little was this unhappy prince addicted to seek revenge, even for the most studied cruelties practised against him.

The conduct of the Community increased in rigour, as the process against Louis seemed to draw nearer. The most ordinary points of personal accommodation were made subjects of debate ere they could be granted, and that

upon the King's being permitted to shave himself, lasted a long while. Every article was taken from him, even to his tooth-pick and pen-knife, and the Queen and princesses were deprived of their scissors and housewives. This led to a touching remark of Louis. He saw his sister, while at work, obliged to bite asunder a thread which she had no means of cutting, and the words escaped him, « Ah! you wanted nothing in your pretty house at Montreuil.»—« Dearest brother,» answered the princess, whose character was that of sanctity, purity of thought, and benevolence, « can I complain of any thing, since Heaven has preserved me to share and to comfort, in some degree, your hours of captivity?» It was, indeed, in the society of his family that the character of Louis shone to the greatest advantage; and if, when on the throne, he did not always possess the energies demanded of his high situation, in the dungeon of the Temple misfortune threw around him the glories of a martyr. His morning hours were spent in instructing or amusing the young Dauphin, a task for which the King's extensive information well qualified him. The captives enjoyed, as they best might, a short interval, when they were permitted to walk in the gardens of the Temple, sure to be insulted (like Charles I. in the same situation) by the sentinels, who puffed volumes of tobacco-smoke in their faces as

they passed them, while others annoyed the ears of the ladies with licentious songs, or the most cruel denunciations.

All this Louis and his family endured with such sainted patience, that several who obtained access to his person were moved by the spectacle of royalty reduced to a situation so melancholy, yet sustained with such gentleness and fortitude. Some of the municipal officers themselves became melted, and changed their ideas of the King, when they beheld him in so new and singular a light.

Stories of the insults which he daily received, and of the meekness with which he sustained them, began to circulate among the citizens of the higher classes; and, joined to their fear of falling completely under the authority of the sans-culottes, led many of the Republicans to cast back their thoughts to the Constitution of 1791, with all its faults, and with its monarchical executive government.

The more wise and sensible of the Girondists began to suspect that they had been too hasty in erecting their favourite Republic, on ground incapable of affording a sound and secure foundation for such an edifice. Buzot gives testimony to this, dated later, no doubt, than the period we are treating of; but the grounds of the reasoning existed as much at the King's trial as after the expulsion of the Girondists. The passage is remarkable. « My

friends," says this distinguished Girondist, « preserved a long time the hopes of establishing a republic in France, even when all seemed to demonstrate that the enlightened classes, whether from prejudice or from just reasoning, felt indisposed to that form of government. That hope did not forsake my friends when the most wicked and vilest of men obtained possession of the minds of the inferior classes, and corrupted them by the opportunities they offered of license and pillage. My friends reckoned on the lightness and aptitude to change proper to the French character, and which they considered to be peculiarly suitable to a republican nation. I have always considered that conclusion as entirely false, and have repeatedly in my heart despaired of my darling wish to establish a republic in my country." In another place he says, « It must not be dissembled that the majority of Frenchmen earnestly desired royalty, and the constitution of 1791. In Paris, the wish was general, and was expressed most freely, though only in confidential society, and among private friends. There were only a few noble and elevated minds who felt themselves worthy to be republicans, and whom the example of the Americans had encouraged to essay the project of a similar government in France, the country of frivolity and mutability. The rest of the nation, with the exception of the ignorant

wretches, without either sense or substance, who vomited abuse against royalty, as at another time they would have done against a commonwealth, and all without knowing why, —the rest of the nation were all attached to the constitution of 1791, and looked on the pure Republicans as a very well-meaning kind of madmen.»

In these lines, written by one of the most sincere of their number, we read the condemnation of the Girondists, who, to adventure the precarious experiment of a republic, in which they themselves saw so many difficulties, were contented to lend their arms and countenance to the destruction of that very government, which they knew to be desired by all the enlightened classes of France except themselves, and which demolition only made room for the dreadful triumvirate,—Danton, Robespierre, and Marat.

But we also see, from this and other passages, that there existed feelings, both in Paris and in the departments, which, if the Convention had made a manly appeal to them, might have saved the King's life, and prevented the Reign of Terror. There began to arise more obvious signs of disaffection to the rulers, and of interest in the King's fate. These were increased when he was brought before the Convention for examination, an occasion upon which Louis was treated with the same marked

appearance of premeditated insult, which had been offered to him when in his dungeon. He had as yet been allowed to enjoy the society of his son, though his intercourse with the other members of the family had been much abridged. He was passionately attached to this unhappy son, who answered his affection, and showed early token of talents which were doomed never to blossom. It was the cruel resolution of his jailers to take the boy from his father on the very morning[1] when Louis was to undergo an interrogatory before the Convention. In other words, to give the deepest blow to his feelings, at the very moment when it was necessary he should combine his whole mental powers for defending his life against his subtle and powerful enemies.

This cruel measure produced in some respect the effect desired. The King testified more deep affliction than he had yet manifested. The child was playing at the game called Siam with his father, and by no effort could the Dauphin get beyond the number *sixteen*. «That is a very unlucky number,» said the child. «True, indeed, my child. I have long had reason to think so, my son,» answered the King. This petty omen seemed soon accomplished by the commissioners of the Assembly, who, without deigning farther

[1] 11th December.

explanation than that Louis must prepare to receive the Mayor of Paris, tore the child from his father, and left him to his sorrow. In about two hours, during which the trampling of many horses was heard, and a formidable body of troops with artillery were drawn up around the prison, the mayor appeared, a man called Chambon, weak and illiterate, the willing tool of the ferocious Community in which he presided. He read to the King the decree of the Convention, that Louis Capet should be brought to their bar. « Capet, » answered Louis, « is not my name—it was that of one of my ancestors. I could have wished that I had not been deprived of the society of my son during the two hours I have expected you—but it is only of a piece with the usage I have experienced for four months. I will attend you to the Convention, not as acknowledging their right to summon me, but because I yield to the superior power of my enemies. »

The crowd pressed much on the King during the passage from the Temple to the Tuileries, where the Convention had now established their sittings, as men who had slain and taken possession. Loud cries were heard, demanding the life of the tyrant; yet Louis preserved the most perfect composure, even when he found himself standing as a criminal before an assembly of his native subjects, born most of them in a rank which excluded them

from judicial offices, till he himself had granted the privilege.

«Louis,» said the President (the versatile, timorous, but subtle Barrère), «you may be seated.» The King sat down accordingly, and listened without apparent emotion to a long act of accusation, in which every accident that had arisen out of the Revolution was gravely charged as a point of indictment against the King. He replied by short laconic answers, which evinced great presence of mind and composure, and alleged the decrees of the National Assembly as authority for the affair of Nancy, and the firing on the people in the Champ de Mars, both of which were urged against him as aggressions on the people. One or two replies we cannot omit inserting.

«You are accused,» said the President, «of having authorized money to be distributed to poor unknowns in the suburb of Saint Antoine. What have you to reply?»—«That I know no greater pleasure,» answered Louis, «than in giving assistance to the needy.»—«You held a review of the Swiss at five o'clock in the morning of the 10th of August.»—«I did,» replied the King, «review the troops that were about my person. It was in presence of the constituted authorities, the department, and the Mayor of Paris—I had sent in vain to request from the Convention a deputation of its members, and I came with my family to place my-

self in their hands.»—« Why did you double the strength of the Swiss Guards at that time?» demanded the President.—«It was done with the knowledge of all the constituted authorities,» said the King, in a tone of perfect composure; « I was myself a constituted authority, I have a right to defend my office.»—« You have caused,» said the President, « the blood of Frenchmen to be shed. What have you to reply?»—« It was not *I* who caused it,» answered Louis, speaking with more emphasis than he had before used.

The King was carried back to his prison, amid threats and abuse from the same banditti whose ranks he had before traversed.

In replying to the articles alleged against him, Louis had followed a different course from Charles, who refused to plead before the tribunal at which he was arraigned. The latter acted with the high spirit of a prince, unwilling to derogate from the honour of the crown he had worn; the former, as a man of honour and probity, was desirous of defending his character wherever it should be attacked, without stopping to question the authority of the court which was met to try him.

A great tumult followed in the Assembly the moment when the King had withdrawn from the Hall. The Jacobins became sensible that the scene which had just passed had deeply affected many of the neutral party, and was

not unlikely to influence their final votes. They demanded an instant decree of condemnation, and that in the name of the oppressed people. « You who have heard the tyrant, » said Billaud-Varennes, « ought in justice to hear the people whom he has oppressed. » The Convention knew well what was meant by the appearance of the people at the bar, and while they trembled at this threat, Duhem made a motion that the King should be executed that very night. The majority, however, retained too much sense of shame to permit themselves to be hurried farther that evening. They indulged the King with the selection of counsel to defend him.

The monarch, on returning to his prison, had found he was doomed to solitary confinement. All intercourse with his family was denied him. He wept, but neither wife, sister, nor child, was permitted to share his tears. It was for the fate of his son that he showed the deepest interest. Yet, anxious as his apprehensions were, they could not reach the extremities to which the child was reduced. The heart of man could not have imagined the cruelty of his lot.

Louis chose for his counsel two lawyers of celebrity, carefully selecting such as he thought would incur least risk of danger by the task imposed. One of these, Tronchet, was too sensible to the honour of his profession to hesi-

tate a moment in accepting the perilous office; but the other, Target, refused to undertake it. The phrase used by this unworthy jurisconsult seemed to involve the King's condemnation. « A free republican, » he said, « ought not to undertake functions of which he feels himself incapable. » Timid as the Convention was, this excuse was heard with disapprobation. It was declaring that the defence of the King was untenable by any friend of the present system.

Several persons offered their services with voluntary devotion, but the preference was claimed by Lamoignon Malesherbes, who, twice called by Louis to be a member of his council, when the office was the object of general ambition, alleged his right to a similar function, when others might reckon it dangerous. This burst of honourable self-devotion awakened a sentiment of honour in the Convention, which, could it have lasted, might have even yet prevented a great national crime.

Paris began to show symptoms of returning interest in the person of Louis. The oft-repeated calumnies against him seemed to lose their influence on all but the ignorant multitude, and hired bandits. The honest devotion of Malesherbes, whose character was known through the nation as a man of talent, honour, and probity, reflected a forcible light on that

of his royal client, who had, in the hour of need, found such a defender. Desèze, an excellent lawyer, was afterwards added to the King's band of counsel; but the King gained little more by this indulgence, excepting the consolation of communicating with such men as Malesherbes and his two associates, at a time when no other friend was suffered to approach him excepting the faithful Cléry, his valet-de-chambre.[1]

The lawyers entertained some hopes, and, in the spirit of their profession, exulted when they saw how facts contradicted the charges of the prosecutors. « Moderate your satisfaction, my friends,» said Louis; « all these favourable circumstances are well known to the gentlemen of the Convention, and if they considered them as entitled to weight in my favour, I should not be in this difficulty. You take, I fear, a fruitless task in hand, but let us perform it as a last duty.» When the term of his second appearance at the Convention arrived, he expressed anxiety at the thoughts of appearing before them with his beard and hair

[1] Cléry we have seen and known, and the form and manners of that model of pristine faith and loyalty can never be forgotten. Gentlemanlike and complaisant in his manners, his deep gravity and melancholy features announced, that the sad scenes in which he had acted a part so honourable, were never for a moment out of his memory.

overgrown, owing to his being deprived of razors and scissors. « Were it not better your Majesty went as you are at present, » said the faithful Cléry, « that all men may see the usage you have received? » — « It does not become me, » answered the King, « to seek to obtain pity. » With the same spirit, he commanded his advocates to avoid all appeals to the passions or the feelings of the judges and audience, and to rest his defence exclusively upon logical deductions from the evidence produced.

When summoned to the Convention, Louis was compelled to wait for a time in the outer hall, where he walked about conversing with his counsel. A deputy who passed heard Malesherbes during this intercourse use to his royal client the courtesies of *Sire—Your Majesty*. « What renders you so bold, » he said, « that you utter these prohibited expressions? » —« Contempt of life, » answered the generous Malesherbes.

Desèze opened his case with great ability. He pleaded with animation the right which the King had to the character of inviolability, a right confirmed to him by the Legislative Assembly after the flight to Varennes, and which implied a complete indemnity for that crime, even supposing a journey from his capital in a post carriage, with a few attendants, could be deemed criminal. But he urged that, if the Convention did not respect his inviolability—

if, in a word, they did not consider him as a King, he was then entitled to the formal securities provided for every citizen by the laws. He ridiculed the idea that, with a trifling force of Swiss, Louis could meditate any serious injury against the Convention. « He prepared, » said Desèze, « for his defence, as you citizens would doubtless do, when you heard that an armed multitude were on their way to surprise you in your sanctuary. » He closed an excellent pleading with an enumeration of the benefits which Louis had conferred on the French nation, and reminded them that their King had given them liberty so soon as they desired to be free. Louis himself said a few words with much firmness. He was remanded to the Temple, and a stormy debate commenced.

At first, the Jacobins attempted to carry all by a clamorous demand of the vote. Lanjuinais replied to them with unexpected spirit, charged them with planning and instigating the assault on the 10th of August, and then with turning on the King the blame which justly lay with themselves alone. Dreadful outcries followed this true and intrepid speech. « Let the friends of the despot die with him! » was the general exclamation of the Jacobins; « to the Abbaye—to the scaffold with the perjured deputy, who slanders the glorious 10th of August! »—« Be it so, » answered Lanjuinais.

« Better death, than the crime of pronouncing an unjust sentence.»

The Girondists were too much themselves accessory to the attack on the Tuileries to follow this bold and manly line of defence, and Lanjuinais stood unsupported in his opinion.

Saint Just and Robespierre eagerly called for a doom of death. The former accused the King of a design to cheat the people out of their liberties by a pretended show of submission to their will, and an affected moderation in exercising his authority. On the 10th of August (he had the effrontery to state this), the King, entering the hall of the Convention with armed followers (the small escort who had difficulty in protecting him through the armed crowd), had violated the asylum of the laws. Besides, as he triumphantly concluded, was it for a people who had declared war against all the tyrants in the world, to sorrow for the fate of their own? Robespierre openly disowned the application of legal forms, and written rubrics of law, to such a case as was before the Convention. The people who had asserted their own right in wresting the sceptre from the hands of Louis, had a right to punish him for having swayed it. He talked of the case being already decided by the unanimous voice and act of the people, from whom all legal authority emanated, and whose authority

was paramount to that of the Convention, which were only their representatives.

Vergniaud, the most eloquent of the Girondists, found nothing better to propose, than that the case of Louis should be decided by an appeal to the nation. He alleged that the people, who, in solemn federation had sworn, in the Champ de Mars, to recognize the Constitution, had thereby sworn the inviolability of the King. This was truly said; but, such being the case, what right had the Convention to protract the King's trial by sending the case from before themselves to the people? If his inviolability had been formally admitted and sworn to by the nation, what had the Convention more to do than recognize the inviolability with which the nation had invested the monarch, and dismiss him from the bar accordingly?

The explanation lay here;—that the eloquent orator was hampered and constrained in his reasoning, by the difficulty of reconciling his own conduct, and that of his associates, to the principles which he was now willing to adopt as those that were just and legal. If the person of the King was indeed inviolable, what was to be thought of their consistency, who, by the means of their daring and devoted associates, Barbaroux and Rebecqui, had actually brought up the force of Marseillois who led the van, and were, in fact, the effi-

cient and almost the only means by which the palace of that inviolable sovereign was stormed, his guards slaughtered, his person committed to prison, and, finally, his life brought in danger? It was the obvious and personal answer arising out of their own previous manœuvres, the *argumentum ad hominem*, as it is called by logicians, which hung a padlock on the lips of the eloquent Vergniaud, while using the argument which, in itself most just and true, was irreconcilable with the revolutionary measures to which he had been an express party. « Do not evil, that good may come of it, » is a lesson which may be learned, not indeed in the transcendental philosophy which authorizes the acting of instant and admitted wrong, with the view of obtaining some distant, hypothetical, and contingent good; but in the rules of christian faith and true philosophy, which commands that each case be weighed on its own circumstances, and decided upon the immutable rules of right or wrong, without admitting any subterfuge founded on the hope of remote contingencies and future consequences.

But Vergniaud's oratory was freed from these unhappy trammels, when, with the fervour of a poet, and the inspiration of a prophet, he declaimed against the faction of Jacobins, and announced the consequences of that sanguinary body's ascending to supreme power,

by placing their first step on the body of Louis. The picture which he drew of the coming evil seemed too horrible for reality; and yet the scenes which followed even more than realized the predictions of the baffled republican, who saw too late and too clearly the tragic conclusion of the scenes, in which he had borne so active a part.

The appeal to the people, or to the nation, had been argued against by the Jacobin speakers, as opening the nearest road to civil war. Indeed it was one of the many objections to this intermediate and evasive plan, that the people of France, convened in their different bodies, were likely to come to very different conclusions on the King's impeachment. Where the Jacobin clubs were strong and numerous, they would have been sure, according to the maxim of their union, to use the compulsory but ready means of open violence, to disturb the freedom of voting on this important question, and would thus have carried by forcible measures the vote of death. In departments in which the Constitutionalists and Royalists had strong interest, it was probable that force would have been repelled by force; and upon the whole, in France, where the law had been long a dead letter, the arbitrement of the nation on the King's fate must and would have proved a bloody one.

But from that picture which must have fol-

lowed the success of his party on this memorable occasion, Vergniaud endeavoured to avert the thoughts of his hearers, while he strove to fix them on the crimes and criminal ambition of the Jacobins.

« It is *they* who wish civil war, » he exclaimed, « who threaten with daggers the National Convention of France—they who preach in the tribune, and in the market-place, doctrines subversive of all social order. *They* are the men who desire civil war, who accuse Justice of pusillanimity, because she will not strike before conviction—who call common humanity a proof of conspiracy, and accuse all those as traitors to their country who will not join in acts of robbery and assassination—those, in fine, who pervert every sentiment and principle of morality, and by the grossest flatteries endeavour to gain the popular assent and countenance to the most detestable crimes.» He dissected the arts of the demagogues in terms equally just and severe. They had been artfully referred to the Temple as the cause of every distress under which the populace laboured; after the death of Louis, which they so eagerly pursued, they would have the same reasons and the same power for directing the odium of every distress or misfortune against the Convention, and making the representatives of France equally obnoxious to the people, as they had now rendered the dethroned

King. He concluded with a horrible picture of Paris under the domination of Jacobinism, which was, however, exceeded by the facts that ensued. « To what horrors, » he said, « will not Paris be delivered, when she becomes the prey of a horde of desperate assassins! Who will inhabit a city, where Death and Desolation will then fix their court? Who will console the ruined citizen, stripped of the wealth he has honourably acquired, or relieve the wants of his family, which his exertions can no longer supply? Go in that hour of need, » he continued, « and ask bread of those who have precipitated you from competence into ruin, and they will answer, 'Hence! dispute with hungry hounds for the carcases of those we have last murdered—or, if you would drink, here is the blood we have lately shed—other nourishment we have none to afford you.' »

The eloquence of Vergniaud, and the exertions of his associates, were in vain. Barrère, the auxiliary of the Jacobins, though scarcely the partaker of their confidence, drew off as usual many of the timid host of neutrals, by alleging specious reasons, of which the convincing power lay in this, that they must consult their own safety rather than the cause of justice. The appeal to the people, on which the Girondists relied as the means of repreiving rather than saving the King—of giving

their consciences the quieting opiate, that he died not by their direct agency—was rejected by four hundred and twenty voices against two hundred and eighty-one. A decisive appeal was made to the Convention on the question, to what punishment the dethroned monarch should be subjected.

The bravos of the Jacobins surrounded the place of meeting on every point of access while this final vote was called, and, to men already affrighted with their situation, added every motive of terror that words, and sometimes acts of violence, could convey. « Think not,» they said, « to rob the people of their prey. If you acquit Louis, we go instantly to the Temple to destroy him with his whole family, and we add to his massacre that of all who befriended him.» Undoubtedly, among the terrified deputies, there were some moved by these horrible arguments, who conceived that, in giving a vote for Louis's life, they would endanger their own, without saving him. Still, however, among this overawed and trembling band of judges, there were many whose hearts failed them as they reflected on the crime they were about to commit, and who endeavoured to find some evasion stopping short of regicide. Captivity till the peace, was in general proposed as a composition. The philosophic humanity of Condorcet threw in fetters, to make the condition more acceptable to the

Jacobins. Others voted for death conditionally. The most intense anxiety prevailed during the vote; and even the banditti in the tribunes suspended their usual howls, and only murmured death to the voter, when the opinion given was for the more lenient punishment. When the Duke of Orleans, who had returned from England on the fall of La Fayette, and sat as a member of the Convention, under the absurd name of Citizen Égalité—when this base prince was asked his vote, there was a deep pause; and when the answer proved Death, a momentary horror electrified the auditors. When the voices were numbered, the direct doom was carried by a majority of fifty-three, being the difference between three hundred and eighty-seven and three hundred and thirty-four. The President announced that the doom of DEATH was pronounced against Louis Capet.

Let none, we repeat, dishonour the parallel passage in England's history, by comparing it with this disgraceful act of murder, committed by a few in rabid fury of gain, by the greater part in mere panic and cowardice. That deed, which Algernon Sidney pronounced the bravest and justest ever done in England,—that *facinus tam illustre* of Milton,—was acted by men, from whose principles and feelings we differ entirely, but not more than the ambition of Cromwell differed from that of the blood-thirsty and envious Robespierre, or the

political views of Hutchinson and his associates, who acted all in honour, from those of the timid and pedantic Girondists.

The same palsy of the mind which had annihilated the courage of the Convention, pervaded Paris. There was a general feeling for the King's condition, a wish that he might be saved, but which never became strong enough to arise into the resolution to effect his safety. Dumourier himself came to Paris with all the splendour of a conqueror, whose victory at Jemappes had added Belgium, as Flanders began to be called, to the French nation; and there can be no doubt, that whatever might be his ulterior design, which his situation and character render somewhat doubtful, his purpose was, in the first place, to secure the person of Louis from farther danger or insult. * But, conqueror as he was, Dumourier, though more favourably placed than La Fayette had been upon a similar attempt, was far from being, with respect to Paris, in the same independent situation in which Cromwell had been to London, or Cæsar to Rome.

The army with which he had accomplished his victories was yet but half his own. Six Commissioners from the Convention, Danton himself being the principal, had carefully remained at his head-quarters, watching his motions, controlling his power, encouraging the private soldiers of each regiment to hold Ja-

cobin clubs exclusive of the authority of the general, studiously placing in their recollection at every instant, that the doctrines of liberty and equality rendered the soldier to a certain point independent of his commander; and reminding them that they conquered by the command of Dumourier, indeed, but under the auspices of the Republic, to whom the general, as they themselves, was but a servant and factor. The more absolute the rule of a community, the more do its members enjoy any relaxation of such severe bonds; so that he who can with safety preach a decay of discipline to an army, of which discipline is the very essence, is sure to find willing listeners. A great part of Dumourier's army was unsettled in their minds by doctrines, which taught an independence of official authority inconsistent with their situation as soldiers, but proper, they were assured, to their quality of citizens.

The manner in which Pache, the minister of war, who, brought into office by Roland, deserted his benefactor to join the Jacobin faction, had conducted his branch of the administration, was so negligent, that it had given ground for serious belief that it was his intention to cripple the resources of the armed force (at whatever risk of national defeat), in such a manner, that if in their disorganised state Dumourier had attempted to move them to-

wards Paris for insuring the safety of Louis, he should find them unfit for such a march. The army had no longer draught-horses for the artillery, and was in want of all with which a regular body of forces should be supplied. Dumourier, according to his own account, both from the want of equipments of every kind, and from the manner in which the Jacobin Commissioners had enfeebled the discipline of his troops, could not have moved towards Paris without losing the command of the army, and his head to boot, before he had got beyond the frontiers of Belgium.

Dumourier had detached, however, according to his own statement, a considerable number of officers and confidential persons, to second any enterprise which he might find himself capable of undertaking in the King's behalf. While at Paris, he states that he treated with every faction in turn, attempting even to move Robespierre; and through means of his own intimate friend Gensonné, he renewed his more natural connexions with the Girondists. But the one party were too determined on their bloody object to be diverted from it; the other, disconcerted in viewing the result of their timid and ambiguous attempt to carry through an appeal to the people, saw no further chance of saving the King's life otherwise than by the risk of their own, and chose rather to be executioners than victims.

Among the citizens of Paris, many of whom Dumourier states himself to have urged with the argument, that the Convention, in assuming the power of judging the King, had exceeded the powers granted to them by the nation, he found hearers, not indeed uninterested or unmoved, but too lukewarm to promise efficient assistance. The citizens were in that state, in which an English poet has said of them,—

> Cold burghers must be struck, and struck like flints,
> Ere their hid fire will sparkle.

With the natural sense of right and justice, they perceived what was expected of them; but felt not the less the trammels of their situation, and hesitated to incur the fury of a popular insurrection, which passiveness on their own part might postpone or avert. They listened to the general with interest, but without enthusiasm; implored him to chuse a less dangerous subject of conversation; and spoke of the power of the Jacobins, as of the influence of a tempest, which mortal efforts could not withstand. With one man of worth and confidence, Dumourier pressed the conversation on the meanness of suffering the city to be governed by two or three thousand banditti, till the citizen looked on the ground and blushed, as he made the degrading confession,—« I see, citizen-general, to what conclusion your argument tends; but we are cowards, and the King

MUST perish. What exertion of spirit can you expect from a city, which, having under arms eighty thousand well-trained militia, suffered themselves, notwithstanding, to be domineered over and disarmed by a comparative handful of rascally Federates from Brest and Marseilles? » The hint was sufficient. Dumourier, who was involved in much personal danger, desisted from efforts, in which he could only compromise his own safety without insuring that of the King. He affirms, that during twenty days' residence near Paris, he witnessed no effort, either public or private, to avert the King's fate; and that the only feelings which prevailed among the higher classes, were those of consternation and apathy.

It was then especially to be regretted, that an emigration, certainly premature, had drained the country of those fiery and gallant nobles, whose blood would have been so readily ventured in defence of the King. Five hundred men of high character and determined bravery would probably have been seconded by the whole burgher-force of Paris, and might have bid open defiance to the Federates, or, by some sudden and bold attempt, snatched from their hands their intended victim. Five hundred—but five hundred—of those who were winning barren laurels under Condé, or, yet more unhappily, were subsisting on the charity of foreign nations, might at this moment,

could they have been collected in Paris, have accomplished the purpose for which they themselves most desired to live, by saving the life of their unhappy sovereign. But although powerful reasons, and yet more aggrieved feelings, had recommended the emigration from that country, it operated like the common experiment of the Leyden vial, one side of which being charged with an uncommon quantity of the electrical fluid, has the effect of creating a deficiency of the same essence upon the other. In the interior of France, the spirit of loyalty was at the lowest ebb; because those upon whom it especially acted as a principle, were divided from the rest of the nation, to whom they would otherwise have afforded both encouragement and example.

The sacrifice, therefore, was to be made—made in spite of those who certainly composed the great majority of Paris, at least of such as were capable of reflection,—in spite of the commander of the army, Dumourier,—in spite of the consciences of the Girondists, who, while they affected an air of republican stoicism, saw plainly, and were fully sensible of the great political error, the great moral sin, they were about to commit.

Undoubtedly they expected, that by joining in, or acquiescing in at least, if not authorising, this unnecessary and wanton cruelty, they should establish their character with the populace as firm and unshaken republicans, who

had not hesitated to sacrifice the King, since his life was demanded at the shrine of freedom. They were not long of learning, that they gained nothing by their mean-spirited acquiescence in a crime which their souls must have abhorred. All were sensible that the Girondists had been all along, notwithstanding their theoretical pretensions in favour of a popular government, lingering and looking back with some favour to the dethroned Prince, to whose death they only consented in sheer coldness and cowardice of heart, because it required to be defended at some hazard to their own safety. The faults at once of duplicity and cowardice were thus fixed on this party; who, detested by the Royalists, and by all who in any degree harboured opinions favourable to monarchy, had their lives and offices sought after by the whole host of Jacobins in full cry, and that on account of faint-spirited wishes, which they had scarcely dared even to attempt to render efficient.

On the 21st of January, 1793, Louis XVI. was publicly beheaded in the midst of his own metropolis, in the Place Louis Quinze, erected to the memory of his grandfather. It is possible, for the critical eye of the historian, to discover much weakness in the conduct of this unhappy monarch; for he had neither the determination necessary to fight for his rights, nor the power of submitting with apparent indifference to

circumstances, where resistance inferred danger. He submitted, indeed, but with so bad a grace, that he only made himself suspected of cowardice, without getting credit for voluntary concession. But yet his behaviour on many trying occasions effectually vindicated him from the charge of timidity, and showed that the unwillingness to shed blood, by which he was peculiarly distinguished, arose from benevolence, not from pusillanimity.

Upon the scaffold, he behaved with the firmness which became a noble spirit, and the patience beseeming one who was reconciled to Heaven. As one of the few marks of sympathy with which his sufferings were softened, the attendance of a confessor, who had not taken the constitutional oath, was permitted to the dethroned monarch. He who undertook the honourable but dangerous office, was a gentleman of the gifted family of Edgeworth of Edgeworthstown; and the devoted zeal with which he rendered the last duties to Louis, had like in the issue to have proved fatal to himself. As the instrument of death descended, the confessor pronounced the impressive words,— « Son of Saint Louis, ascend to Heaven! »

There was a last will of Louis XVI. circulated upon good authority, bearing this remarkable passage : — « I recommend to my son, should he have the misfortune to become king,

to recollect that his whole faculties are due to the service of the public; that he ought to consult the happiness of his people, by governing according to the laws, forgetting all injuries and misfortunes, and in particular those which I may have sustained. But while I exhort him to govern under the authority of the laws, I cannot but add, that this will be only in his power, in so far as he shall be endowed with authority to cause right to be respected, and wrong punished; and that without such authority, his situation in the government must be more hurtful than advantageous to the state.»

Not to mingle the fate of the illustrious victims of the royal family with the general tale of the sufferers under the Reign of Terror, we must here mention the deaths of the rest of that illustrious house, which closed for a time a monarchy, that, existing through three dynasties, had given sixty-six kings to France.

It was not to be supposed, that the Queen was to be long permitted to survive her husband. She had been even more than he the object of revolutionary detestation; nay, many were disposed to throw on Marie Antoinette, almost exclusively, the blame of those measures, which they considered as counter-revolutionary. She came to France a gay, young, and beautiful princess—she found in her husband a faithful, affectionate, almost an uxorious

husband. In the early years of her reign she was guilty of two faults.

In the first place, she dispensed too much with court-etiquette, and wished too often to enjoy a retirement and freedom, inconsistent with her high rank and the customs of the court. This was a great though natural mistake. The etiquette of a court places round the great personages whom it regards, a close and troublesome watch, but that very guard acts as a barrier against calumny; and when these formal witnesses are withdrawn, evil tongues are never wanting to supply with infamous reports a blank, which no testimony can be brought to fill up with the truth. No individual suffered more than Marie Antoinette from this species of slander, which imputed the most scandalous occupations to hours that were only meant to be stolen from form and from state, and devoted to the ease which crowned heads ought never to dream of enjoying.

Another natural, yet equally false step, was her interfering more frequently with politics than became her sex; exhibiting thus her power over the King, and at the same time lowering him in the eyes of his subjects, who, whatever be the auspices under which their own domestic affairs are conducted, are always scandalised if they see, or think they see,

anything like female influence directing the councils of their sovereigns. We are uncertain what degree of credit is to be given to the Memoirs of Besenval, but we believe they approach near the truth in representing the Queen as desirous of having a party of her own, and carrying points in opposition to the ministers; and we know that a general belief of this sort was the first foundation of the fatal report, that an Austrian cabal existed in the Court of France, under the direction of the Queen, which was supposed to sacrifice the interests of France to favour those of the Emperor of Germany.

The terms of her accusation were too basely depraved to be even hinted at here. She scorned to reply to it, but appealed to all who had been mothers, against the very possibility of the horrors which were stated against her. The widow of a king, the sister of an emperor, was condemned to death, dragged in an open tumbril to the place of execution, and beheaded on the 16th October, 1793. She suffered death in her 39th year.

The Princess Elizabeth, sister of Louis, of whom it might be said, in the words of Lord Clarendon, that she resembled a chapel in a king's palace, into which nothing but piety and morality enter, while all around is filled with sin, idleness, and folly, did not, by the

most harmless demeanour and inoffensive character, escape the miserable fate in which the Jacobins had determined to involve the whole family of Louis XVI. Part of the accusation redounded to the honour of her character. She was accused of having admitted to the apartments of the Tuileries some of the National Guards, of the section of Filles Saint Thomas, and causing the wounds to be looked to which they had received in a skirmish with the Marseillois, immediately before the 10th of August. The princess admitted her having done so, and it was exactly in consistence with her whole conduct. Another charge stated the ridiculous accusation, that she had distributed bullets chewed by herself and her attendants, to render them more fatal, to the defenders of the Castle of the Tuileries; a ridiculous fable, of which there was no proof whatever. She was beheaded in May, 1794, and met her death as became the manner in which her life had been spent.

We are weary of recounting these atrocities, as others must be of reading them. Yet it is not useless that men should see how far human nature can be carried, in contradiction to every feeling the most sacred, to every pleading whether of justice or of humanity. The Dauphin we have already described as a promising child of seven years old, an age

at which no offence could have been given, and from which no danger could have been apprehended. Nevertheless, it was resolved to destroy the innocent child, and by means to which ordinary murders seem deeds of mercy.

The unhappy boy was put in charge of the most hard-hearted villain whom the Community of Paris, well acquainted where such agents were to be found, were able to select from their band of Jacobins. This wretch, a shoemaker called Simon, asked his employers, « what was to be done with the young wolf-whelp; Was he to be slain?» — « No.»—« Poisoned?» —«No.»—«Starved to death?» - «No.» — « What then?»—« He was to be got rid of. » Accordingly, by a continuance of the most severe treatment—by beating, cold, vigils, fasts, and ill usage of every kind, so frail a blossom was soon blighted. He died on the 8th June, 1795.

After this last horrible crime, there was a relaxation in favour of the daughter, and now the sole child, of this unhappy house. The Princess Royal, whose qualities have since honoured even her birth and blood, experienced from this period a mitigated captivity. Finally, on the 19th December, 1795, this last remaining relic of the family of Louis was permitted to leave her prison and her country, in exchange for Beurnonville and others, whom,

on that condition, Austria delivered from captivity. She became afterwards the wife of her cousin the Duke d'Angoulême, eldest son of the reigning monarch of France, and obtained, by the manner in which she conducted herself at Bordeaux in 1815, the highest praise for gallantry and spirit.

## CHAPTER VI.

Dumourier—His displeasure at the Treatment of the Flemish Provinces by the Convention—His Projects in consequence—Gains the ill-will of his Army—and is forced to fly to the Austrian Camp—Lives many years in retreat, and finally dies in England.—Struggles betwixt the Girondists and Jacobins in the Convention.—Robespierre impeaches the Leaders of the Girondists—and is denounced by them.—Decree of Accusation passed against Marat, who conceals himself.—Commission of Twelve appointed.—Marat acquitted, and sent back to the Convention with a Civic Crown.—Terror and Indecision of the Girondists.—Jacobins prepare to attack the Palais Royal, but are repulsed—Repair to the Convention, who recal the Commission of Twelve.—Louvet and other Girondist Leaders fly from Paris.—Convention go forth in Procession to expostulate with the People—Forced back to their Hall, and compelled to Decree the Accusation of Thirty of their Body.—Girondists finally ruined—and their principal Leaders perish in Prison, by the Guillotine, and by Famine—Close of their History.

While the Republic was thus indulging the full tyranny of irresistible success over the remains of the royal family, it seemed about to sustain a severe shock from one of its own children, who had arisen to eminence by its paths. This

was Dumourier, whom we left victor at Jemappes, and conqueror, in consequence, of the Flemish provinces. These fair possessions, the Convention, without a moment's hesitation, annexed to the dominions of France, and proceeded to pour down upon them their tax-gatherers, commissaries, and every other denomination of spoilers, who not only robbed without ceremony the unfortunate inhabitants, but insulted their religion by pillaging and defacing their churches, set their laws and privileges at contempt, and tyrannized over them in the very manner, which had so recently induced the Flemings to offer resistance to their own hereditary princes of the house of Austria.

Dumourier, naturally proud of his conquest, felt for those who had surrendered to his arms upon assurance of being well treated, and was sensible that his own honour and influence were aimed at; and that it was the object of the Convention to make use of his abilities only as their implements, and to keep his army in a state of complete dependence upon themselves.

The general, on the contrary, had the ambition as well as the talents of a conqueror; he considered his army as the means of attaining the victories, which, without him, they could not have achieved, and he desired to retain it under his own immediate command, as a com-

batant wishes to keep hold of the sword which he has wielded with success. He accounted himself strongly possessed of the hearts of his soldiers, and therefore thought himself qualified to play the part of military umpire in the divisions of the state, which La Fayette had attempted in vain; and it was with this view, doubtless, that he undertook that expedition to Paris, in which he vainly attempted a mediation in behalf of the King.

After leaving Paris, Dumourier seems to have abandoned Louis personally to his fate, yet still retaining hopes to curb the headlong course of the Revolution.

Two plans presented themselves to his fertile invention, nor can it be known with certainty to which he most inclined. He may have entertained the idea of prevailing upon the army to decide for the youthful Dauphin to be their Constitutional King; or, as many have thought, it may better have suited his personal views to have recommended to the throne a gallant young prince of the blood, who had distinguished himself in his army, the eldest son of the miserable Duke of Orleans. Such a change of dynasty might be supposed to limit the wishes of the proposed sovereign to that share of power intrusted to him by the Revolution, since he would have had no title to the crown save what arose from the Constitution. But, to qualify himself in either case

to act as the supreme head of the army, independent of the National Convention, it was necessary that Dumourier should pursue his conquests, act upon the plan laid down by the ministers at Paris, and in addition to his title of victor in Belgium, add that of conqueror of Holland. He commenced, accordingly, an invasion of the latter country, with some prospect of success. But though he took Gertruydenberg, and blockaded Bergen-op-Zoom, he was repulsed from Williamstadt; and at the same time he received information that an army of Austrians, under the Prince of Saxe-Coburg, a general of eminence, though belonging to the old military school of Germany, was advancing into Flanders. Dumourier retreated from Holland to make a stand against these new enemies, and was again unfortunate. The French were defeated at Aix-la-Chapelle, and their new levies almost entirely dispersed. Chagrined with this disaster, Dumourier gave an imprudent loose to the warmth of his temper. Following the false step of La Fayette, in menacing before he was prepared to strike, he wrote a letter to the Convention, threatening the Jacobin party with the indignation of his army. This was on the 12th March, 1793, and six days afterwards he was again defeated in the battle of Neerwinden.

It must have been extremely doubtful, whether, in the very pitch of victory, Dumou-

rier possessed enough of individual influence over his army, to have inclined them to declare against the National Convention. The forces which he commanded were not to be regarded in the light of a regular army, long embodied, and engaged perhaps for years in difficult enterprises, and in foreign countries, where such a force exists as a community only by their military relations to each other; where the common soldiers know no other home than their tents, and no other direction than the voice of their officers; and the officers no other laws than the pleasure of the general. Such armies, holding themselves independent of the civil authorities of their country, came at length, through the habit of long wars and distant conquests, to exist in the French empire, and upon such rested the foundation stone of the Imperial throne; but as yet, the troops of the Republic consisted either of the regiments revolutionized, when the great change had offered commissions to privates, and batons to subalterns, or of new levies, who had their very existence through the Revolution, and whose common nickname of Carmagnoles, expressed their republican origin and opinions. Such troops might obey the voice of the general on the actual field of battle, but were not very amenable even to the ordinary course of discipline elsewhere, and were not likely to exchange their rooted po-

litical principles, with all the ideas of license connected with them, at Dumourier's word of command, as they would have changed their front, or have adopted any routine military movement. Still less were they likely implicitly to obey this commander, when the *prestige* of his fortune seemed in the act of abandoning him, and least of all, when they found him disposed to make a compromise with the very foe who had defeated him, and perceived that he negotiated, by abandoning his conquests to the Austrians, to purchase the opportunity or permission of executing the counter-revolution which he proposed.

Nevertheless, Dumourier, either pushed on by an active and sanguine temper, or being too far advanced to retreat, endeavoured, by intrigues in his own army, and an understanding with the Prince of Saxe-Coburg, to render himself strong enough to overset the reigning party in the Convention, and restore, with some modifications, the Constitution of 1791. He expressed this purpose with imprudent openness. Several generals of division declared against his scheme. He failed in obtaining possession of the fortresses of Lille, Valenciennes, and Condé. Another act of imprudence aggravated the unpopularity into which he began to fall with his army. Four Commissioners of the Convention remonstrated publicly on the course he was pursuing. Dumourier,

not contented with arresting them, had the imprudence to send them to the camp of the Austrians, prisoners, thus delivering up to the public enemy the representatives of the government under which he was appointed, and for which he had hitherto acted, and proclaiming his alliance with the invaders whom he was commissioned to oppose.

All this rash conduct disunited the tie between Dumourier and his army. The resistance to his authority became general, and finally, it was with great difficulty and danger that he made his escape to the Austrian camp, with his young friend the Duke de Chartres.

All that this able and ambitious man saved in his retreat was merely his life, of which he spent some years afterwards in Germamy, concluding it in England about 1822, without again making any figure in the political horizon.[1] Thus, the attempt of Dumourier, to use military force to stem the progress of the Revolution, failed, like that of La Fayette some months before. To use a medical simile, the imposthume was not yet far enough advanced, and sufficiently come to a head, to be benefited by the use of the lancet.

Meanwhile, the Convention, thougn trium-

[1] Dumourier was a man of pleasing manners and lively conversation. He lived in retirement, near Ealing, in Middlesex.

phant over the schemes of the revolted general, was divided by the two parties to whom its walls served for an arena, in which to aim against each other the most deadly blows. It was now manifest that the strife must end tragically for one of the parties, and all circumstances pointed out the Girondists as the victims They had indeed still the command of majorities in the Convention, especially when the votes were taken by scrutiny or ballot; on which occasions the feebler deputies of the Plain could give their voice according to their consciences, without its being known that they had done so. But in open debate, and when the members voted *viva voce*, amongst the intimidating cries and threats of tribunes filled by an infuriated audience, the spirit of truth and justice seemed too nearly allied to that of martyrdom, to be prevalent generally amongst men who made their own safety the rule of their political conduct. The party, however, continued for several months to exercise the duties of administration, and to make such a struggle in the Convention as could be achieved by oratory and reasoning, against underhand intrigue, supported by violent declamation, and which was, upon the least signal, sure of the aid of actual brutal violence.

The Girondists, we have seen, had aimed decrees of the Assembly at the triumvirate, and a plot was now laid among the Jacobins, to

repay that intended distinction by the actual strokes of the axe, or, failing that, of the dagger.

When the news of Dumourier's defection arrived, the Jacobins, always alert in prepossessing the public mind, held out the Girondists as the associates of the revolted general. It was on them whom they directed the public animosity, great and furious in proportion to the nature of the crisis. That majority of the Convention, whom the traitor Dumourier affirmed was sound, and with which he acted in concert, intimated, according to the Jacobins, the Girondists the allies of his treasons. They called out in the Convention on the 8th of March, for a tribunal of judgment fit to decide on such crimes, without the delays arising from ordinary forms of pleading and evidence, and without even the intervention of a jury. The Girondists opposed this measure, and the debate was violent. In the course of the subsequent days, an insurrection of the people was prepared by the Jacobins, as upon the 20th June and 10th of August. It ought to have broken out upon the 10th of March, which was the day destined to put an end to the ministerial party by a general massacre. But the Girondists received early intelligence of what was intended, and absented themselves from the Convention on the day of peril. A body of Federates from Brest, about 400 strong, were

also detached in their favour by Kervelegan, one of the deputies from the ancient province of Bretagne, and who was a zealous Girondist. The precaution, however slight, was sufficient for the time. The men who were prepared to murder were unwilling to fight, however strong the odds on their side; and the mustering of the Jacobin bravos proved, on this occasion, an empty menace.

Duly improved, a discovered conspiracy is generally of advantage to the party against which it was framed. But Vergniaud, when, in a subsequent sitting, he denounced to the Convention the existence of a conspiracy to put to death a number of the deputies, was contented to impute it to the influence of the aristocracy, of the nobles, the priests, and the emissaries of Pitt and Coburg; thus suffering the Jacobins to escape every imputation of that blame, which all the world knew attached to them, and to them only. He was loudly applauded. Marat, who rose after him, was applauded as loudly, and the Revolutionary Tribunal was established.

Louvet, who exclaims against Vergniaud for his pusillanimity, says, that the orator alleged in his excuse, «the danger of incensing violent men, already capable of all excesses.» They had come to the boar-chase, they had roused him and provoked his anger, and now they felt, too late, that they lacked weapons with which

to attack the irritated monster. The plot of the 10th March had been compared to that of the catholics on the 5th November, in England. It had been described in the *Moniteur* as a horrible conspiracy, by which a company of ruffians, assuming the title of *de la Glacière*, in remembrance of the massacre of Avignon, surrounded the hall for two days, with the purpose of dissolving the National Convention by force, and putting to death a great proportion of the deputies. Yet the Convention passed over, without effective prosecution of any kind, a crime of so enormous a die; and in doing so, showed themselves more afraid of immediate personal consequences, than desirous of seizing an opportunity to rid France of the horrible faction by whom they were scourged and menaced.

In the midst of next month the Jacobins became the assailants, proud, it may be supposed, of the impunity under which they had been sheltered. Robespierre impeached by name the leaders of the Girondists, as accomplices of Dumourier. But it was not in the Convention where Robespierre's force lay. Guadet, with great eloquence, repelled the charge, and in his turn denounced Robespierre and the Jacobins. He proclaimed to the Convention that they sat and debated under raised sabres and poniards, which a moment's signal could let loose on them; and he read from the jour-

nal conducted by Marat, an appeal, calling on the people to rise in insurrection. Fear and shame gave the Convention momentary courage. They passed a decree of accusation against Marat, who was obliged to conceal himself for a few days.

Buzot, it may be remarked, censures this decree against Marat as impolitic, seeing it was the first innovation affecting the inviolability of the persons of the deputies. In point of principle he is certainly right; but as to any practical effects resulting from this breach of privilege, by reprisals on the other side, we are quite sceptical. Whatever violence was done to the Girondists, at the end of the conflict, was sure to have befallen them, whether Marat had been arrested or not. Precedents were as useless to such men, as a vizard to one of their ruffians. Both could do their business barefaced.

The Convention went farther than the decree of accusation against Marat; and for the first time showed their intention to make a stand against the Jacobins. They nominated a commission of Twelve Members, some Girondists, some neutrals, to watch over and repress the movements of such citizens as should seem disposed to favour anarchy.

The Convention were not long of learning the character of the opposition which they had now defied. Pache, Mayor of Paris, and one

of the worst men of the Revolution, appeared at the bar of the Convention with two thousand petitioners, as they were called. They demanded, in the name of the sections, the arrest of twenty-two of the most distinguished of the Girondist leaders. The Convention got rid of the petition by passing to the order of the day. But the courage of the anarchists was greatly increased; and they saw that they had [illegible] to bear down with repeated attacks an enemy who had no fortification save the frail defences of the law, which it was the pride of the Jacobins to surmount and to defy. Their demand of proscription against these unfortunate deputies was a measure from which they never departed; and their audacity in urging it placed that party on the defensive, who ought, in all reason, to have been active in the attack.

The Girondists, however, felt the extremity to which they were reduced, and sensible of the great advantage to be attained by being the assailants in such a struggle, they endeavoured to regain the offensive.

The Revolutionary Tribunal to which Marat had been sent by the decree of accusation, knew their business too well to convict any one, much less such a distinguished patriot, who was only accused of stimulating the people to exercise the sacred right of insurrection. He was honourably acquitted, after scarcely the semblance of a trial, and brought back to

his place in the Convention, crowned with a civic coronet, and accompanied by a band of such determined ruffians as were worthy to form his body-guard. They insisted on filing through the hall, while a huge pioneer, their spokesman, assured the Convention that the people loved Marat, and that the cause of Marat and the people would always be the same.

Meanwhile, the Committee of Twelve proceeded against the Terrorists with some vigour. One of the most furious provokers of insurrection and murder was Hébert, a devoted Jacobin, substitute of the Procureur Syndic of the Community. Speaking to this body, who now exercised the whole powers of magistracy in Paris, this man had not blushed to demand the heads of three hundred deputies. He was arrested and committed to prison.

This decisive action ought in policy to have been followed by other steps equally firm. The Girondists, by displaying confidence, might surely have united to themselves a large number of the neutral party; and might have established an interest in the sections of Paris consisting of men, who, though timid without leaders, held in deep horror the revolutionary faction, and trembled for their families and their property, if put under the guardianship, as it had been delicately expressed, of the rabble of the fauxbourgs. The very show of four hundred Bretons had disconcerted the whole conspiracy

of the 10th of March; and therefore, with a moderate support of determined men, statesmen of a more resolute and practised character than these theoretical philosophers, might have bid defiance to the mere mob of Paris, aided by a few hundreds of hired ruffians. At the worst they would have perished in attempting to save their country from the most vile and horrible tyranny.

The Girondists, however, sat in the Convention, like wild-fowl when the hawk is abroad, afraid either to remain where they were, or to attempt a flight. Yet, as they could make no armed interest in Paris, there was much to induce them to quit the metropolis, and seek a place of free deliberation elsewhere. France, indeed, was in such a state, that had these unfortunate experimentalists possessed any influence in almost any department, they could hardly have failed to bring friends around them, if they had effected a retreat to it. Versailles seems to have been thought of as the scene of their adjournment, by those who nourished such an idea; and it was believed that the inhabitants of that town, repentant of the part they had played in driving from them the royal family and the Legislative Body, would have stood in their defence. But neither from the public journals and histories of the time, nor from the private memoirs of Buzot, Barbaroux, or Louvet, does it appear that

these infatuated philosophers thought either of flight or defence. They appear to have resembled the wretched animal, whose chance of escape from its enemies rests only in the pitiful cries which it utters when seized. Their whole system was a castle in the air, and when it vanished they could only sit down and lament over it. On the other hand, it must be allowed to the Girondists, that the inefficiency and imbecility of their conduct was not to be attributed to personal cowardice. Enthusiasts in their political opinions, they saw their ruin approaching, waited for it, and dared it, but, like that of the monarch they had been so eager to dethrone, and by dethroning whom they had made way for their own ruin, their resolution was of a passive, not an active character; patient and steady to endure wrong, but inefficient where the object was to do right towards themselves and France.

For many nights these unhappy and devoted deputies, still possessed of the ministerial power, were so far from being able to insure their own safety, or that of the country under their nominal government, that they had shifted about from one place of rendezvous to another, not daring to occupy their own lodgings, and usually remaining, three or four together armed for defence of their lives, in such places of secrecy and safety as they could devise.

It was on the night preceding the 30th of May, that Louvet, with five of the most distinguished of the Girondist party, had absconded into such a retreat, more like robbers afraid of the police than legislators, when the tocsin was rung at dead of night. Rabaud de Saint Etienne, a protestant clergyman, and one of the most distinguished of the party for humanity and resolution, received it as a death-knell, and continued to repeat, *Illa suprema dies.*

The alarm was designed to raise the suburbs; but in this task the Jacobins do not seem to have had the usual facilities—at least they began by putting their blood-hounds on a scent, upon which they thought them likely to run more readily than the mere murder or arrest of twenty or thirty deputies of the Convention. They devised one which suited admirably, both to alarm the wealthier citizens, and teach them to be contented with looking to their own safety, and to animate the rabble with the hope of plunder. The rumour was spread, that the section of La Butte-des-Moulins, comprehending the Palais Royal, and the most wealthy shops in Paris, had become counter-revolutionary—had displayed the white cockade, and were declaring for the Bourbons.

Of this not a word was true. The citizens of the Palais Royal were disposed perhaps to royalty—certainly for a quiet and established government—but loved their own shops much

better than the house of Bourbon, and had no intention of placing them in jeopardy either for king or kaisar. They heard with alarm the accusation against them, mustered in defence of their property, shut the gates of the Palais Royal, which admits of being strongly defended, turned cannon with lighted matches upon the mob as they approached their precincts, and showed, in a way sufficient to intimidate the rabble of Saint Antoine, that though the wealthy burgesses of Paris might abandon to the mob the care of killing kings and changing ministries, they had no intention whatsoever to yield up to them the charge of their counters and tills. Five sections were under arms and ready to act. Not one of the Girondist party seems to have even attempted to point out to them, that by an exertion to preserve the independence of the Convention, they might rid themselves for ever of the domination, under which all who had property, feeling, or education, were rendered slaves by these recurring insurrections. This is the more extraordinary, as Raffé, the commandant of the section of La Butte-des-Moulins, had actually marched to the assistance of the Convention on the 10th of March; then, as now, besieged by an armed force.

Left to themselves, the sections who were in arms to protect order thought it enough to provide against the main danger of the mo-

ment. The sight of their array, and of their determined appearance, far more than their three-coloured cockades, and cries of *Vive la République*, were sufficient to make the insurgents recognize those as good citizens, who could not be convicted of *incivism* without a bloody combat.

They were, however, at length made to comprehend by their leaders, that the business to be done lay in the Hall of the Convention, and that the exertions of each active citizen were to entitle him to forty *sous* for the day's work. In the whole affair there was so much of cold trick, and so little popular enthusiasm, that it is difficult to believe that the plotters might not have been countermined and blown to the moon with their own petard, had there been active spirit or practical courage on the side of those who were the assailed party. But we see no symptoms of either. The Convention were surrounded by the rabble, and menaced in the grossest terms. Under the general terror inspired by their situation, they finally recalled the Commission of Twelve, and set Hébert at liberty;—concessions which, though short of those which the Jacobins had determined to insist upon, were such as showed that the power of the Girondists was entirely destroyed, and that the Convention itself might be overawed at the pleasure of whosoever should command the mob of Paris.

The Jacobins were now determined to follow up their blow, by destroying the enemy whom they had disarmed. The 2d of June was fixed for this purpose. Louvet, and some others of the Girondist party, did not chuse to await the issue, but fled from Paris. To secure the rest of the devoted party, the barriers of the city were shut.

On this decisive occasion the Jacobins had not trusted entirely to the efficiency of their suburb forces. They had also under their orders about two thousand Federates, who were encamped in the Champs-Élysées, and had been long tutored in the part they had to act. They harnessed guns and howitzers, prepared grape-shot and shells, and actually heated shot red-hot, as if their purpose had been to attack some strong fortress, instead of a hall filled with the unarmed representatives of the people. Henriot, commander-general of the armed force of Paris, a fierce, ignorant man, entirely devoted to the Jacobin interest, took care, in posting the armed force which arrived from all hands around the Convention, to station those nearest to the Legislative Body, whose dispositions with regard to them were most notoriously violent. They were thus entirely surrounded as if in a net, and the Jacobins had little more to do than to select their victims.

The universal cry of the armed men who

surrounded the Convention was for a decree of death or outlawry against twenty-two members of the Girondist party, who had been pointed out, by the petition of Pache, and by subsequent petitions of the most inflammatory nature, as accomplices of Dumourier, enemies of the good city of Paris, and traitors, who meditated a federative instead of an indivisible republic. This list of proscription included the ministers.

The Convention were in a dreadful situation; it was manifest that the arm of strong force was upon them. Those who were supposed to belong to the Girondist party were struck and abused as they entered the hall, hooted and threatened as they arose to deliver their opinion. The members were no longer free to speak or vote. There could be no deliberation within the Assembly, while such a scene of tumult and fury continued and increased without.

Barrère, leader, as we have said, of the Plain, or neutral party, who thought with the Girondists in conscience, and acted with the Jacobins in fear, proposed one of those seemingly moderate measures, which involve as sure destruction to those who adopt them, as if their character were more decisively hostile. With compliments to their good intentions, with lamentations for the emergency, he entreated the proscribed Girondists to sacrifice

themselves, as the unhappy subjects of disunion in the Republic, and to resign their character of deputies. The Convention, he said, would then declare them under the protection of the law,—as if they were not invested with that protection while they were convicted of no crime, and clothed at the same time with the inviolability, of which he advised them to divest themselves. It was as if a man were requested to lay aside his armour, on the promise that the ordinary garments which he wore under it should be rendered impenetrable.

But a Frenchman is easily induced to do that to which he is provoked, as involving a point of honour.

This treacherous advice was adopted by Isnard, Dussaulx, and others of the proscribed deputies, who were thus persuaded to abandon what defences remained to them, in hopes to soften the ferocity of an enemy, too inveterate to entertain feelings of generosity.

Lanjuinais maintained a more honourable struggle. « Expect not from me,» he said to the Convention, « to hear either of submission, or resignation of my official character. Am I free to offer such a resignation, or are you free to receive it?» As he would have turned his eloquence against Robespierre and the Jacobins, an attempt was made by Legendre and Chabot to drag him from the tribune. While he resisted he received several blows.

« Cruel men! » he exclaimed—« The Heathens adorned and caressed the victims whom they led to the slaughter—you load them with blows and insult. »

Shame procured him a moment's hearing, during which he harangued the Assemby with much effect on the baseness, treachery, cruelty, and impolicy, of thus surrendering their brethren to the call of a blood-thirsty multitude from without, stimulated by a vengeful minority of their own members. The Convention made an effort to free themselves from the toils in which they were entangled. They resolved to go out in a body, and ascertain what respect would be paid to their persons by the armed force assembled around them.

They sallied forth accordingly, in procession, into the gardens of the Tuileries, the Jacobins alone remaining in the Hall; but their progress was presently arrested by Henriot, at the head of a strong military staff, and a large body of troops. Every passage leading from the gardens was secured by soldiers. The President read the decree of the Assemby, and commanded Henriot's obedience. The commandant of Paris only replied by reining back his horse, and commanding the troops to stand to their arms. « Return to your posts, » he said to the terrified legislators; « the people demand the traitors who are in the bosom of your Assembly, and will not depart till their will is

accomplished.» Marat came up presently afterwards at the head of a select band of a hundred ruffians. He called on the multitude to stand firm to their purpose, and commanded the Convention, in the name of the people, to return to their place of meeting, to deliberate, and, above all, to obey.

The Convention re-entered their Hall in the last degree of consternation, prepared to submit to the infamy which now seemed inevitable, yet loathing themselves for their cowardice, even while obeying the dictates of self-preservation. The Jacobins meanwhile enhanced their demand, like her who sold the books of the Sibyls. Instead of twenty-two deputies, the accusation of thirty was now demanded. Amid terror mingled with acclamations, the decree was declared to be carried. This doom of proscription passed on the motion of Couthon, a decrepid being, whose lower extremities were paralysed,—whose benevolence of feeling seemed to pour itself out in the most gentle expressions, uttered in the most melodious tones,—whose sensibility led him constantly to foster a favourite spaniel in his bosom, that he might have something on which to bestow kindness and caresses,—but who was at heart as fierce as Danton, and as pitiless as Robespierre.

Great part of the Convention did not join in this vote, protesting loudly against the force

imposed on them. Several of the proscribed deputies were arrested, others escaped from the Hall by the connivance of their brethren, and of the official persons attached to the Convention, some, foreseeing their fate, had absented themselves from the meeting, and were already fled from Paris.

Thus fell, without a blow struck, or sword drawn in their defence, the party in the Convention which claimed the praise of acting upon pure republican principles—who had overthrown the throne, and led the way to anarchy, merely to perfect an ideal theory. They fell, as the wisest of them admitted, dupes to their own system, and to the vain and impracticable idea of ruling a large and corrupt empire, by the motives which may sway a small and virtuous community. They might, as they too late discovered, have as well attempted to found the Capitol on a bottomless and quaking marsh, as their pretended Republic in a country like France. The violent revolutionary expedients, the means by which they acted, were turned against them by men, whose ends were worse than their own. The Girondists had gloried in their share of the triumphs of the 10th of August; yet what was that celebrated day, save an insurrection of the populace against the constituted authority of the time, as those of the 31st of May and 2d of June, 1793, under which the Giron-

dists succumbed, were directed against them as successors in the government? In the one case, a king was dethroned; in the other, a government or band of ministers dismissed. And if the people had a right, as the Girondists claimed in their behalf, to act as the executioners of their own will in the one instance, it is difficult to see upon what principle their power should be trammelled in the other.

In the important process against the King, the Girondists had shown themselves pusillanimous;—desirous to save the life of a guiltless man, they dared not boldly vouch his innocence, but sheltered themselves under evasions which sacrificed his character, while they could not protect his life. After committing this great error, they lost every chance of allying with efficacy under their standard what might remain of well-intentioned individuals in Paris and in France, who, if they had seen the Girondists, when in power, conduct themselves with firmness, would probably rather have ranked themselves in the train of men who were friends to social order, however republican their tenets, than have given way to the anarchy which was doomed to ensue.

Upon all their own faults, whether of act or of omission, the unfortunate Girondists had now ample time to meditate. Twenty-two of their leading members, arrested on the fatal 2d of June, already waited their doom in pri-

son, while the others wandered on, in distress and misery, through the different departments of France.

The fate of those who were prisoners was not very long suspended. In about three months they were brought to trial, and convicted—of *royalism!* Such was the temper of France at the time, and so gross the impositions which might be put upon the people, that the men in the empire, who, upon abstract principle, were most averse to monarchy, and who had sacrificed even their consciences to join with the Jacobins in pulling down the throne, were now accused and convicted of being Royalists, and that at a time when what remained of the royal family was at so low an ebb, that the imprisoned Queen could not obtain the most ordinary book for the use of her son, without a direct and formal application to the Community of Paris.[1]

When the Girondists were brought before the tribunal, the people seem to have shown more interest in men, whose distinguished talents had so often swayed the Legislative Body, than was altogether acceptable to the Jacobins, who were induced to fear some difficulty in carrying through their conviction. They

[1] Witness the following entry in the minutes of the *Commune,* on a day, be it remarked, betwixt the 29th May and the 2d June: « Antoinette fait demander pour son fils le roman de Gil-Blas de Santillane—accordé. »

obtained a decree from the Convention, declaring that the President of the Revolutionary Tribunal should be at liberty to close the procedure so soon as the Jury should have made up their minds, and without hearing the accused in their defence. This frightful expedient of cutting short the debate (*couper la parole* was the phrase) was often resorted to on those revolutionary trials. Unquestionably, they dreaded the reasoning of Brissot, and the eloquence of Vergniaud, of which they had so long and so often experienced the thunders. One crime,—and it was a fatal offence, considering before what judicature they stood,—seems to have been made out by Brissot's own letters. It was that by which the late members attempted to effect a combination among the departments, for the purpose of counterpoising, if possible, the tremendous influence which the capital and the revolutionary part of its magistracy exercised over the Convention, whom Paris detained prisoners within her walls. This delinquency alone was well calculated to remove all scruples from the minds of a jury, selected from that very class of Parisians, whose dreadful importance would have been altogether annihilated by the success of such a scheme. The accused were found guilty as conspirators against the unity and indivisibility of the

Republic; and the liberty and safety of the French people.

When the sentence of death was pronounced, one of their number, Valazé, plunged a dagger in his bosom. The rest suffered in terms of the sentence, and were conveyed to the place of execution in the same tumbril with the bloody corpse of their suicide colleague. Brissot seemed downcast and unhappy. Fauchet, a renegade priest, showed signs of remorse. The rest affected a Roman resolution, and went to execution singing a parody on the Hymn of the Marseillois, in which that famous composition was turned against the Jacobins. They had long rejected the aids of religion, which, early received and cherished, would have guided their steps in prosperity, and sustained them in adversity. Their remaining stay was only that of the same vain and speculative philosophy, which had so deplorably influenced their political conduct.

Those members of the Girondist party who, escaping from Paris to the departments, avoided their fate somewhat longer, saw little reason to pride themselves on the political part they had chosen to act. They found the eastern and southern departments in a ferment against Paris and the Jacobins, and ready to rise in arms; but they became aware, at the same time, that no one was thinking of

or regretting their system of a pure republic, the motives by which the malcontents were agitated being of a very different, and far more practical character. Great part of the nation, all at least of better feelings, had been deeply affected by the undeserved fate of the King, and the cruelty with which his family had been, and were still treated. The rich feared to be pillaged and murdered by the Jacobins; the poor suffered no less under scarcity of grain, under the depreciation of assignats, and a compulsory levy of no less than three hundred thousand men over France, to supply the enormous losses of the French army. But everywhere the insurrections took a royalist, and not a republican character; and although the Girondists were received at Caen and elsewhere with compassion and respect, the votes they had given in the King's trial, and their fanatic zeal for a kind of government for which France was totally unfitted, and which those from whom they obtained refuge were far from desiring, prevented their playing any distinguished part in the disturbed districts of the West.

Buzot seems to see this in the true sense. « It is certain, » he says, « that if we could have rested our pretensions upon having wished to establish in France a moderate government of that character, which, according to many well-instructed persons, best suited the people of

France» (indicating a limited monarchy), « we might have entertained hopes of forming a formidable coalition in the department of Calvados, and rallying around us all whom ancient prejudices attached to royalty.» As it was, they were only regarded as a few enthusiasts, whom the example of America had induced to attempt the establishment of a republic, in a country where all hopes and wishes, save those of the Jacobins, and the vile rabble whom they courted and governed, were turned towards a moderate monarchy. Buzot also observed, that the many violences and atrocities, forced levies, and other acts of oppression practised in the name of the Republic, had disgusted men with a form of government, where cruelty seemed to rule over misery by the sole aid of terror. With more candour than some of his companions, he avows his error, and admits that he would, at this closing scene, have willingly united with the moderate monarchists, to establish royalty under the safeguard of constitutional restraints.

Several of the deputies, Louvet, Riouffe, Barbaroux, Pétion, and others, united themselves with a body of Royalists of Bretagne, to whom General Wimpfen had given something of the name of an army, but which never attained the solidity of one. It was defeated at Vernon, and never afterwards could be again assembled.

The proscribed deputies, at first with a few armed associates, afterwards entirely deserted, wandered through the country, incurring some romantic adventures, which have been recorded by the pen of their historian, Louvet. At length, six of the party succeeded in obtaining the means of transpo tation to Bordeaux, the capital of that Gironde from which their party derived its name, and which those who were natives of it, remembering only the limited society in which they had first acquired their fame, had described as possessing and cherishing the purest principles of philosophical freedom. Guadet had protested to his companions in misfortune a thousand times, that if liberal, honourable, and generous sentiments were chased from every other corner of France, they were nevertheless sure to find refuge in La Gironde. The proscribed wanderers had well nigh kissed the land of refuge, when they disembarked, as in a country of assured protection. But Bordeaux was by this time no more than a wealthy trading town, where the rich, trembling before the poor, were not willing to increase their own imminent danger, by intermeddling with the misfortunes of others. All doors, or nearly so, of La Gironde itself, were shut against the Girondists, and they wandered outcasts in the country, suffering every extremity of toil and hunger, and bringing, in some cases, death upon

the friends who ventured to afford them refuge.

Louvet alone escaped, of the six Girondists who took refuge in their own peculiar province. Guadet, Salles, and the enthusiastic Barbaroux, were seized and executed at Bordeaux, but not till the last had twice attempted suicide with his pistols. Buzot and Pétion killed themselves in extremity, and were found dead in a field of corn. This was the same Pétion who had been so long the idol of the Parisians, and who, when the forfeiture of the King was resolved on, had been heard to say with simple vanity, « If they should force *me* to become Regent now, I cannot see any means by which I can avoid it.» Others of this unhappy party shared the same melancholy fate. Condorcet, who had pronounced his vote for the King's life, but in perpetual fetters, was arrested, and poisoned himself. Rabaud de St Etienne was betrayed by a friend in whom he trusted, and was executed. Roland was found dead in the high road, accomplishing a prophecy of his wife, whom the Jacobins had condemned to death, and who had declared her conviction that her husband would not long survive her. That remarkable woman, happy if her high talents had, in youth, fallen under the direction of those who could better have cultivated them, made before the revolutionary tribunal a defence more manly than the most eloquent of the Girondins. The by-

standers, who had become amateurs in cruelty, were as much delighted with her deportment, as the hunter with the pulling down a noble stag. « What sense,» they said; « what wit, what courage! What a magnificent spectacle it will be to behold such a woman upon the scaffold!» She met her death with great firmness, and, as she passed the statue of Liberty, on her road to execution, she exclaimed, « Ah, Liberty! what crimes are committed in thy name!»

About forty-two of the Girondist deputies perished by the guillotine, by suicide, or by the fatigue of their wanderings. About twenty-four escaped these perils, and were, after many and various sufferings, recalled to the Convention, when the Jacobin influence was destroyed. They owed their fall to the fantastic philosophy and visionary theories which they had adopted, not less than to their presumptuous confidence, that popular assemblies, when actuated by the most violent personal feelings, must yield to the weight of argument, as inanimate bodies obey the impulse of external force; and that they who possess the highest powers of oratory, can, by mere elocution, take the weight from clubs, the edge from sabres, and the angry and brutal passions from those who wield them. They made no further figure as a party in any of the state changes in France; and, in relation to their experimental republic, may remind the reader of the presumptuous

ho thought of antiquity, who was caught in the eri'.t oak, which he in vain attempted to rend asunder. History has no more to say on the subject of La Gironde, considered as a party name.

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# CHAPTER VII.

Views of Parties in Britain relative to the Revolution—Affiliated Societies—Counterpoised by Aristocratic Associations—Aristocratic Party eager for War with France.—The French proclaim the Navigation of the Scheldt.—British Ambassador recalled from Paris, and French Envoy no longer accredited in London.—France declares War against England.—British Army sent Holland, under the Duke of York—State of the Army View of the Military Positions of France—in Flanders—on the Rhine—in Piedmont—Savoy—on the Pyrenees.—State of the War in La Vendée—Description of the Country—Le Bocage Le Loutoux—Close ion betwixt the Nobles and Peasantry—Both strong- [illegible] volu- Religion of the Vendeans [illegible] —A general Insurrection takes Organization and Habits of he British Cabinet on the —Pitt—Windham— [illegible] ion of Mertz [illegible] en- and [illegible] defeat, in e French [illegible] aval—But are ultimately and dispersed.—Unfortunate Expedi- iberon.—Charette defeated and executed, ar of La Vendée finally terminated.—Return ate of France in Spring 1793.—Unsuccessful of Bordeaux, Marseilles, and Lyons, to the ion.—Siege of Lyons.—Its Surrender and dread- nishment.—Siege of Toulon.

cobins, by their successive victories May and 2d June, 1793, had van-

who thousand driven from the field their admeriaries; and we have already seen with what fury they had pursued their scattered enemies, and dealt among them vengeance and death. But the situation of the country, both in regard to external and internal relations, was so precarious, that it required the exertion of men as bold and unhesitating as now assumed the guidance of the power of France, to exert the energies necessary to repel foreign force, and at the same time to subdue internal dissension.

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Mr Pitt had been making up his mind to the same point; but feeling how much his own high talents were turned to the improvement of the internal regulations and finances of the country, he hesitated for some time to adopt a hostile course, though approved by the sovereign, and demanded by a large proportion of his subjects. But new circumstances arose every day to compel a decision on this important point.

The French, whether in their individual or collective capacities, have been always desi- to take the lead among European nations,

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who thought themselves neglected,—men of merit, who conceived themselves oppressed, —experimentalists, who would willingly put the laws in their revolutionary crucible,—and men desirous of novelties in the church and in the state, either from the eagerness of restless curiosity, or the hopes of bettering by the change. Above all, Britain had a far too ample mass of poverty and ignorance, subject always to be acted upon by the hope of license. Affiliated societies were formed in almost all the towns of Great Britain. They corresponded with each other, held very high and intimidating language, and seemed to frame themselves on the French model. They addressed the National Convention of France directly in the name of their own bodies, and of societies united for the same purpose; and congratulated them on their freedom, and on the manner in which they had gained it, with many a broad hint that their example would not be lost on Britain. The persons who composed these societies had, generally speaking, little pretension to rank or influence; and though they contained some men of considerable parts, there was a deficiency of anything like weight or respectability in their meetings. Their consequence lay chiefly in the numbers who were likely to be influenced by their arguments; and these were extraordinarily great, especially in large towns, and in the manufac-

turing districts. That state of things began to take place in Britain, which had preceded the French Revolution; but the British aristocracy, well cemented together, and possessing great weight in the state, took the alarm sooner, and adopted precautions more effectual, than had been thought of in France. They associated together in political unions on their side, and, by the weight of influence, character, and fortune, soon obtained a superiority, which made it dangerous, or at least inconvenient, to many, whose situations in society rendered them in some degree dependent upon the favour of the aristocracy, to dissent violently from their opinions. The political Shibboleth, used by these associations, was a renunciation of the doctrines of the French Revolution; and they have been reproached that this abhorrence was expressed by some of them in terms so strong, as if designed to withhold the subscribers from attempting any reformation in their own government, even by the most constitutional means. In short, while the democratical party made in their clubs the most violent and furious speeches against the aristocrats, the others became doubly prejudiced against reform of every description, and all who attempted to assert its propriety. After all, had this political ferment broke out in Britain at any other period, or on any other occasion, it would

have probably passed away like other heart-burnings of the same description, which interest for a time, but weary out the public attention, and are laid aside and forgotten. But the French Revolution blazed in the neighbourhood like a beacon of hope to the one party, of fear and caution to the other. The shouts of the democratic triumphs—the foul means by which their successes were obtained, and the cruel use which was made of them, increased the animosity of both parties in England. In the fury of party zeal, the democrats excused many of the excesses of the French Revolution, in respect of its tendency; while the other party, in condemning the whole Revolution, both root and branch, forgot that, after all, the struggle of the French nation to recover their liberty, was, in its commencement, not only justifiable, but laudable.

The wild and inflated language addressed by the French statesmen to mankind in general, and the spirit of conquest which the nation had lately evinced, mixed with their marked desire to extend their political principles, and with the odium which they had heaped upon themselves by the King's death, made the whole aristocratic party, commanding a very large majority in both Houses of Parliament, become urgent that war should be declared against France; a holy war, it was said, against

treason, blasphemy, and murder, and a necessary war, in order to break off all connexion betwixt the French government and the discontented part of our own subjects, who could not otherwise be prevented from the most close, constant, and dangerous intercourse with them.

Another reason for hostilities, more in parallel with similar cases in history, occurred, from the French having, by a formal decree, proclaimed the Scheldt navigable. In so doing, a point had been assumed as granted, upon the denial of which the States of Holland had always rested as the very basis of their national prosperity. It is probable that this might, in other circumstances, have been made the subject of negotiation. But the difference of opinion on the general politics of the Revolution, and the mode in which it had been carried on, set the governments of France and England in such direct and mortal opposition to each other, that war became inevitable.

Lord Gower, the British ambassador, was recalled from Paris, immediately on the King's execution. The prince to whom he was sent was no more; and, on the same ground, the French envoy at the Court of St James's, though not dismissed by his Majesty's government, was made acquainted that the ministers no longer considered him as an accredited person. Yet,

through Maret,[1] a subordinate agent, Pitt continued to keep up some correspondence with the French government, in a lingering desire to preserve peace, if possible. What the British minister chiefly wished was, to have satisfactory assurances that the strong expressions of a decree, which the French Convention had passed on the 19th November, were not to be considered as applicable to England. The decree was in these words: «The National Convention declares, in the name of the French nation, that it will grant fraternity and assistance to all people who wish to recover their liberty; and it charges the executive power to send the necessary orders to the generals, to give succours to such people, and to defend those citizens who have suffered, or may suffer, in the cause of liberty.»—«That this decree might not remain a secret to those for whose benefit it was intended, a translation of it, in every foreign language, was ordered to be printed.»[2] The Convention, as well as the ministers of France, refused every disavowal of the decree as applicable to Great Britain; were equally reluctant to grant explanation of any kind on the opening of the Scheldt; and finally, without one dissentient voice, the whole Convention, in a full meeting, declared

[1] Since Duke of Bassano. Ed.

[2] Annual Register for 1793, p. 153.

war upon England;—which last nation is, nevertheless, sometimes represented, even at this day, as having declared war upon France.

In fact, Mr Pitt came unwillingly into the war. With even more than his great father's ministerial talents, he did not habitually nourish the schemes of military triumph which were familiar to the genius of Chatham, and was naturally unwilling, by engaging in an expensive war, to derange those plans of finance by which he had retrieved the revenues of Great Britain from a very low condition. It is said of Chatham, that he considered it as the best economy, to make every military expedition which he fitted out, of such a power and strength, as to overbear, as far as possible, all chance of opposition. A general officer who was to be employed in such a piece of service, having demanded a certain body of troops as sufficient to effect his purpose, « Take double the number, » said Lord Chatham, « and answer with your head for your success. » His son had not the same mode of computation, and would perhaps have been more willing to have reduced the officer's terms, chaffered with him for the lowest number, and finally dispatched him at the head of as small a body as the general could have been prevailed on to consider as affording any prospect of success. This untimely economy of resources arose from the expense attending the British army. They are

certainly one of the bravest, best appointed, and most liberally paid in Europe; but in forming demands on their valour, and expectations from their exertions, their fellow-subjects are apt to indulge extravagant computations, from not being in the habit of considering military calculations, or being altogether aware of the numerical superiority possessed by other countries. That one Englishman will fight two Frenchmen is certain; but that he will beat them, though a good article of the popular creed, must be allowed to be more dubious; and it is not wise to wage war on such odds, or to suppose that, because our soldiers are infinitely valuable to us, and a little expensive besides, it is therefore judicious to send them in small numbers against desperate odds.

Another point, well touched by Sheridan, on the debate on the question of peace or war, was not sufficiently attended to by the British administration. That statesman, whose perception of the right and wrong of any great constitutional question was as acute as that of [illegible]omsoever of his great political contemporaries, said, « He wished every possible exertion to be made for the preservation of peace. If, however, that were impracticable, in such case, but in such case only, he proposed to vote for a vigorous war. Not a war of shifts and scraps, of timid operation, or protracted effort; but a war conducted with such energy

as might convince the world that we were contending for our dearest and most valuable privileges.»[1]

Of this high-spirited and most just principle, the policy of Britain unfortunately lost sight during the first years of the war, when there occurred more than one opportunity in which a home and prostrating blow might have been aimed at her gigantic adversary.

A gallant auxiliary army was, however, immediately fitted out, and embarked for Holland, with his Royal Highness the Duke of York at their head, as if the King had meant to give to his allies the dearest pledge in his power, how serious was the interest which he took in their defence.

But though well equipped, and commanded, under the young prince, by Abercromby, Dundas, Sir William Erskine, and many other officers of gallantry and experience, it must be owned that the British army had not then recovered the depressing and disorganizing effects of the American war. The soldiers were, indeed, fine men on the parade; but their external appearance was acquired by dint of a thousand minute and vexatious attentions, exacted from them at the expense of private comfort, and which, after all, only gave them the exterior appearance of high drilling, in ex-

[1] Annual Register for 1793, p. 250.

change for ease of motion and simplicity of dress. No general system of manœuvres, we believe, had been adopted for the use of the forces; each commanding-officer managed his regiment according to his own pleasure. In a field-day, two or three battalions could not act in concert, without much previous consultation; in action, they got on as chance directed. The officers, too, were acquainted both with their soldiers and with their duty, in a degree far inferior to what is now exacted from them. Our system of purchasing commissions, which is necessary to connect the army with the country, and the property of the country, was at that time so much abused, that a mere beardless boy might be forced at once through the subordinate and subaltern steps into a company or a majority, without having been a month in the army. In short, all those gigantic abuses were still subsisting, which the illustrious prince whom we have named eradicated from the British army, by regulations for which his country can never be sufficiently grateful, and without which they could never have performed the distinguished part finally destined to them in the terrible drama, which was about to open under less successful auspices.

There hung also, like a cloud, upon the military fame of England, the unfortunate issue of the American struggle, in which the advantages obtained by regulars, against less

disciplined forces, had been trifled with in the commencement, until the genius of Washington, and the increasing spirit and numbers of the continental armies, completely overbalanced, and almost annihilated, that original preponderance.

Yet the British soldiery did not disgrace their high national character, nor show themselves unworthy of fighting under the eye of the son of their monarch; and when they joined the Austrian army, under the Prince of Saxe-Coburg, gave many demonstrations both of valour and discipline. The storming the fortified camp of the French at Famars—the battle of Lincelles—the part they bore in the sieges of Valenciennes and Condé, both of which surrendered successively to the allied forces, upheld the reputation of their country, and amounted, indeed, to what in former wars would have been the fruits of a very successful campaign. But Europe was now arrived at a time when war was no longer to be carried on according to the old usage, by the agency of standing armies of moderate numbers; when a battle lost and won, or a siege raised or successful, was thought sufficient for the active exertions of the year, and the troops on either side were drawn off into winter quarters, while diplomacy took up the contest which tactics had suspended. All this was to be laid aside; and instead of this drowsy

state of hostility, nations were to contend with each other like individuals in mortal conflict, bringing not merely the hands, but every limb of the body into violent and furious struggle. The situation of France, both in internal and external relations, required the most dreadful efforts which had been ever made by any country; and the exertions which she demanded were either willingly made by the enthusiasm of the inhabitants, or extorted by the energy and severity of the Revolutionary government. We must bestow a single glance on the state of the country, ere we proceed to notice the measures adopted for its defence.

On the eastern frontier of Flanders, considerable advances had been made by the English and Hanoverian army, in communication and conjunction with the Austrian force under the Prince of Saxe-Coburg, an excellent officer, but who, belonging to the old school of formal and prolonged war, never sufficiently considered that a new description of enemies was opposed to him, who were necessarily to be combated in a different manner from those whom his youth had encountered, and who, unenterprising himself, does not appear either to have calculated upon, or prepared to counteract, strokes of audacity and activity on the part of the enemy.

The war on the Rhine was furiously main-

tained by Prussians and Austrians united. The French lost the important town of Mentz, were driven out of other places, and experienced many reverses, although Custine, Moreau, Houchard, Beauharnais, and other general officers of high merit, had already given lustre to the arms of the Republic. The loss of the strong lines of Weissenburgh, which were carried by General Wurmser, a distinguished Austrian officer, completed the shade of disadvantage which here hung on the Republican banners.

In Piedmont, the French were also unsuccessful, though the scale was less grand and imposing. The Republican General Brunet was unfortunate, and he was forced from his camp at Belvidere; while on the side of Savoy, the King of Sardinia also obtained several temporary advantages.

On the Pyrenees, the Republican armies had been equally unsuccessful. A Spanish army, conducted with more spirit than had been lately the case with the troops of that once proud monarchy, had defeated the Republican General Servan, and crossed the Bidassoa. On the eastern extremity of these celebrated mountains, the Spaniards had taken the towns of Port Vendre and Collioure.

Assailed on so many sides, and by so many enemies, all of whom, excepting the Sardinians, had more or less made impression upon

the frontiers of the Republic, it might seem, that the only salvation which remained for France, must have been sought for in the unanimity of her inhabitants. But so far was the nation from possessing this first of requisites for a successful opposition to the overpowering coalition which assailed her, that a dreadful civil war was already waged in the western provinces of France, which threatened, from its importance and the success of the insurgents, to undo in a great measure the work of the Revolution; while similar discords, breaking out on different points in the south, menaced conclusions no less formidable.

It does not belong to us to trace the interesting features of the war in La Vendée with a minute pencil, but they mingle too much with the history of the period to be altogether omitted.

We have elsewhere[1] said, that, speaking of La Vendée as a district, it was there alone, through the whole kingdom of France, that the peasants and the nobles, in other words the proprietors and cultivators of the soil, remained on terms of close and intimate connexion and friendship, which made them feel the same undivided interest in the great changes created by the Revolution. The situation of La Vendée, its soil and character, as well as

[1] Vol. I. p. 30.

the manners of the people, had contributed to an arrangement of interests and habits of thinking, which rendered the union betwixt these two classes indissoluble.

La Vendée is a wooded and pastoral country, not indeed mountainous, but abounding in inequalities of ground, crossed by brooks, and intersected by a variety of canals and ditches, made for drainage, but which become, with the numerous and intricate thickets, posts of great strength in the time of war. The inclosures seemed to be won, as it were, out of the woodland; and the paths which traversed the country were so intricate and perplexed, as to render it inaccessible to strangers, and not easily travelled through by the natives themselves. There were almost no roads practicable for ordinary carriages during the rainy season; and the rainy season in La Vendée is a long one. The ladies of rank, when they visited, went in carriages drawn by bullocks; the gentlemen, as well as the peasants, travelled chiefly on foot; and by assistance of the long leaping-poles, which they carried for that purpose, surmounted the ditches and other obstacles which other travellers found impassable.

The whole tract of country is about one hundred and fifty miles square, and lies at the mouth and on the southern bank of the Loire. The internal part is called Le Bocage (the

Thicket), because part ed region, where the gree of the wooded and affectionate partner which belongs to the who natural judge and portion of La Vendée whic The people had Loire, and nearer its mouth ancient French in roux. The neighbouring led with dissatis- the insurrection, but the streams of the Re- racter which it assumed were deriving them- from La Vendée.

The union betwixt the noblesse of La Vendée and their peasants was of the most intimate character. Their chief exportations from the district consisted in the immense herds of cattle which they reared in their fertile meadows, and which supplied the consumption of the metropolis. These herds, as well as the land on which they were raised, were in general the property of the seigneur; but the farmer possessed a joint interest in the latter. He managed the stock, and disposed of it at market, and there was an equitable adjustment of their interest in disposing of the produce.

Their amusements were also in common. The chase of wolves, not only for the sake of sport, but to clear the woods of those ravenous animals, was pursued as of yore by the seigneur at the head of his followers and vassals. Upon the evenings of Sundays and holidays, the young people of each village and *métairie* regually desire the court-yard of the chateau, as

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ful and attached, though humble friend of his lord; he was his partner in bad and good fortune; submitted to his decision the disputes which might occur betwixt him and his neighbours; and had recourse to his protection, if he sustained wrong, or was threatened with injustice from any one.

This system of simple and patriarchal manners could not have long subsisted under any great inequality of fortune. Accordingly, we find that the wealthiest of the Vendean nobility did not hold estates worth more than twelve or fifteen hundred a-year, while the lowest might be three or four hundred. They were not accordingly much tempted by exuberance of wealth to seek to display magnificence; and such as went to court, and conformed to the fashions of the capital, were accustomed to lay them aside in all haste when they returned to the Bocage, and to reassume the simple manners of their ancestors.

All the incentives to discord which abounded elsewhere through France, cage (the ng

in this wild and wooded region, where the peasant was the noble's affectionate partner and friend, the noble the natural judge and protector of the peasant. The people had retained the feelings of the ancient French in favour of royalty; they listened with dissatisfaction and disgust to the accounts of the Revolution as it proceeded; and feeling themselves none of the evils in which it originated, its whole tendency became the object of their alarm and suspicion. The neighbouring districts, and Bretagne in particular, were agitated by similar commotions; for although the revolutionary principles predominated in the towns of the west, they were not relished by the country people any more than by the noble. Great agitation had for some time taken place through the provinces of Bretagne, Anjou, Maine, and Poitou, to which the strength of the insurrection in La Vendée gave impulse. It was not, however, a political impulse which induced the Vendeans to take the field. The influence of religion, seconded by that of natural affection, was the immediate stimulating motive.

In a country so simple and virtuous in its manners as we have described La Vendée, religious devotion must necessarily be a general attribute of the inhabitants, who, conscious of loving their neighbours as themselves, are equally desirous, to the extent of their strength

and capacity, to love and honour the Great Being who created all. The Vendeans were therefore very regular in the performance of their prescribed religious duties; and their parish priest, or *curé*, held an honoured and influential rank in their little society, was the attendant of the sick-bed of the peasant, as well for rendering medical as religious aid; his counsellor in his family affairs, and often the arbiter of disputes not of sufficient importance to be carried before the seigneur. The priests were themselves generally natives of the country, more distinguished for the primitive duty with which they discharged their office, than for talents and learning. The curé took frequent share in the large hunting parties which he announced from the pulpit, and, after having said mass, attended in person with the fowling-piece on his shoulder. This active and simple manner of life rendered the priests predisposed to encounter the fatigues of war. They accompanied the bands of Vendeans with the crucifix displayed, and promised, in the name of the Deity, victory to the survivors, and honour to those who fell in the patriotic combat. But Madame La Roche-Jacquelin repels, as a calumny, their bearing arms, except for the purpose of self-defence.

Almost all these parish priests were driven from their cures by the absurd and persecuting fanaticism of that decree of the Assembly,

which, while its promoters railed against illiberality and intolerance, deprived of their office and of their livelihood, soon after of liberty and life, those churchmen who would not renounce the doctrines in which they had been educated, and which they had sworn to maintain.[1] In La Vendée, as elsewhere, where the curates resisted this unjust and impolitic injunction of the legislature, persecution followed on the part of the government, and was met in its turn by violence on that of the people.

The peasants maintained in secret their ancient pastors, and attended their ministry in woods and deserts; while the intruders, who were settled in the livings of the recusants, dared hardly appear in the churches without the protection of the National Guards.

So early as 1791, when Dumourier commanded the forces at Nantes, and the districts adjacent, the flame of dissension had begun to kindle. That general's sagacity induced him to do his best to appease the quarrel by moderating betwixt the parties. His military eye detected in the inhabitants and their country an alarming scene for civil war. He received the slightest concessions on the part of the parish priests as satisfactory, and appears

[1] See vol. I. p. 234.

to have quieted the disturbances of the country, at least for a time.

But in 1793, the same causes of discontent, added to others, hurried the inhabitants of La Vendée into a general insurrection of the most formidable description. The events of the 10th of August, 1792, had driven from Paris a great proportion of the Royalist nobility, who had many of them carried their discontents and their counter-revolutionary projects into a country prepared to receive and adopt them.

Then followed the Conventional decree, which supported their declaration of war by a compulsory levy of three hundred thousand men throughout France. This measure was felt as severe by even those departments in which the revolutionary principles were most predominant, but was regarded as altogether intolerable by the Vendeans, averse alike to the republican cause and principles. They resisted its exaction by main force, delivered the conscripts in many instances, defeated the National Guards in others, and finding that they had incurred the vengeance of a sanguinary government, resolved by force to maintain the resistance which in force had begun. Thus originated that celebrated war, which raged so long in the very bosom of France, and threatened the stability of her government, even while the Republic was achieving the

most brilliant victories over her foreign enemies.

It is remote from our purpose to trace the history of these hostilities; but a sketch of their nature and character is essential to a general view of the Revolution, and the events connected with it.

The insurgents, though engaged in the same cause, and frequently co-operating, were divided into different bodies, under leaders independent of each other. Those of the right bank of the Loire were chiefly under the orders of the celebrated Charette, who, descended from a family distinguished as commanders of privateers, and himself a naval officer, had taken on him this dangerous command. An early wandering disposition, not unusual among youth of eager and ambitious character, had made him acquainted with the inmost recesses of the woods, and his native genius had induced him to anticipate the military advantages which they afforded. In his case, as in many others, either the sagacity of these uninstructed peasants led them to chuse for command men whose talents best fitted them to enjoy it, or perhaps the perils which environed such authority prevented its being aspired to, save by those whom a mixture of resolution and prudence led to feel themselves capable of maintaining their character when invested with it. It was remarkable also, that

in chusing their leaders, the insurgents made no distinction between the noblesse and the inferior ranks. Names renowned in ancient history—Talmont, d'Autichamp, Lescure, and La Roche-Jacquelin, were joined in equal command with the gamekeeper Stofflet; Cathelineau, an itinerant wool-merchant; Charette, a *roturier* of slight pretensions; and others of the lowest order, whom the time and the public voice called into command, but who, nevertheless, do not seem, in general, to have considered their official command as altering the natural distinction of their rank in society.[1] In their success, they formed a general council of officers, priests, and others, who held their meetings at Châtillon, and directed the military movements of the different bodies, assembled them at pleasure on particular points, and for particular objects of service, and dispersed them to their homes when these were accomplished.

With an organization so simple, the Vendean insurgents, in about two months, possessed themselves of several towns and an

[1] Madame La Roche-Jacquelin mentions an interesting anecdote of a young plebeian, a distinguished officer, whose habits of respect would scarce permit him to sit down in her presence. This cannot be termed servility. It is the noble pride of a generous mind, faithful to its original impressions, and disclaiming the merits which others are ready to heap on it.

extensive tract of country; and though repeatedly attacked by regular forces, commanded by experienced generals, they were far more frequently victors than vanquished, and inflicted more loss on the republicans by gaining a single battle, than they themselves sustained in repeated defeats.

Yet at first their arms were of the most simple and imperfect kind. Fowling-pieces, and fusees of every calibre, they possessed from their habits as huntsmen and fowlers; for close encounter they had only scythes, axes, clubs, and such weapons as anger places most readily in the hands of the peasant. Their victories, latterly, supplied them with arms in abundance, and they manufactured gunpowder for their own use in great quantity.

Their tactics were peculiar to themselves, but of a kind so well suited to their country and their habits, that it seems impossible to devise a better and more formidable system. The Vendean took the field with the greatest simplicity of military equipment. His scrip served as a cartridge-box, his uniform was the country short jacket and pantaloons, which he wore at his ordinary labour; a cloth knapsack contained bread and some necessaries, and thus he was ready for service. They were accustomed to move with great secrecy and silence among the thickets and inclosures by which their country is intersected, and were

thus enabled to chuse at pleasure the most favourable points of attack or defence. Their army, unlike any other in the world, was not divided into companies, or regiments, but followed in bands, and at their pleasure, the chiefs to whom they were most attached. Instead of drums or military music, they used, like the ancient Swiss and Scottish soldiers, the horns of cattle for giving signals to their troops. Their officers wore, for distinction, a sort of chequered red handkerchief knotted round their head, with others of the same colour tied round their waist, by way of sash, in which they stuck their pistols.[1]

The attack of the Vendeans was that of sharp-shooters. They dispersed themselves so as to surround their adversaries, with a semicircular fire, maintained by a body of formidable marksmen, accustomed to take aim with fatal precision, and whose skill was the more dreadful, because, being habituated to take advantage of every tree, bush, or point of shelter, those who were dealing destruction

[1] The adoption of this wild costume, which procured them the name of *Brigands*, from its fantastic singularity, originated in the whim of Henri La Roche Jacquelin, who first used the attire. But as this peculiarity, joined to the venturous exposure of his person, occasioned a general cry among the Republicans, of « Aim at the red handkerchief, » other officers assumed the fashion to diminish the danger of the chief whom they valued so highly, until at length it became a kind of uniform.

amongst others, were themselves comparatively free from risk. This manœuvre was termed *s'égailler*; and the execution of it, resembling the Indian bush-fighting, was, like the attack of the Red warriors, accompanied by whoops and shouts, which seemed, from the extended space through which they resounded, to multiply the number of the assailants.

When the Republicans, galled in this manner, pressed forward to a close attack, they found no enemy on which to wreak their vengeance; for the loose array of the Vendeans gave immediate passage to the head of the charging column, while its flanks, as it advanced, were still more exposed than before to the murderous fire of their invisible enemies. In this manner they were sometimes led on from point to point, until the regulars meeting with a barricade, or an *abbatis*, or a strong position in front, or becoming perhaps involved in a defile, the Vendeans exchanged their fatal musketry for a close and furious onset, throwing themselves with the most devoted courage among the enemy's ranks, and slaughtering them in great numbers. If, on the other hand, the insurgents were compelled to give way, a pursuit was almost as dangerous to the Republicans as an engagement. The Vendean, when hard-pressed, threw away his clogs, or wooden-shoes, of which he could

make himself a new pair at the next resting-place, sprang over a fence or canal, loaded his fusee as he ran, and discharged it at the pursuer with a fatal aim, whenever he found opportunity of pausing for that purpose.

This species of combat, which the ground rendered so advantageous to the Vendeans, was equally so in case of victory or defeat. If the Republicans were vanquished, their army was nearly destroyed; for the preservation of order became impossible, and without order their extermination was inevitable, while baggage, ammunition, carriages, guns, and all the material part, as it is called, of the defeated army, fell into possession of the conquerors. On the other hand, if the Vendeans sustained a loss, the victors found nothing on the field but the bodies of the slain, and the *sabots*, or wooden-shoes, of the fugitives. The few prisoners whom they made had generally thrown away or concealed their arms, and their army having no baggage or carriages of any kind, could of course lose none. Pursuit was very apt to convert an advantage into a defeat, for the cavalry could not act, and the infantry, dispersed in the chase, became frequent victims to those whom they pursued.

In the field, the Vendeans were courageous to rashness. They hesitated not to attack and carry artillery with no other weapons than their staves, and most of their worst losses

proceeded from their attacking fortified towns and positions with the purpose of carrying them by main force. After conquest they were in general humane and merciful. But this depended on the character of their chiefs. At Machecoul, the insurgents conducted themselves with great ferocity in the very beginning of the civil war; and towards the end of it, mutual and reciprocal injuries had so exasperated the parties against each other, that quarter was neither given nor taken on either side. Yet until provoked by the extreme cruelties of the Revolutionary party, and unless when conducted by some peculiarly ferocious chief, the character of the Vendeans united clemency with courage. They gave quarter readily to the vanquished, but having no means of retaining prisoners, they usually shaved their heads before they set them at liberty, that they might be distinguished, if found again in arms, contrary to their parole. A no less striking feature, was the severity of a discipline respecting property, which was taught them only by their moral sense. No temptation could excite them to pillage, and Madame La Roche-Jacquelin has preserved the following singular instance of their simple honesty:—After the peasants had taken the town of Bressuire by storm, she overheard two or three of them complain of the want of tobacco, to the use of which they were addicted, like the natives of moist coun-

tries in general. « What,» said the lady, « is there no tobacco in the shops?»—«Tobacco enough,» answered the simple-hearted and honest peasants, who had not learned to make steel supply the want of gold,—« tobacco enough; but we have no money to pay for it.»

Amidst these primitive warriors were mingled many gentlemen of the first families in France, who, Royalists from principle, had fled to La Vendée rather than submit to the dominion of the Convention, or the Convention's yet more cruel masters. There were found many men, the anecdotes told of whom remind us continually of the age of Henri Quatre, and the heroes of chivalry. In these ranks, and almost on a level with the valiant peasants of which they were composed, fought the calm, steady, and magnanimous Lescure,—d'Elbée, a man of the most distinguished military reputation,—Bonchamp, the gallant and the able officer, who, like the Constable Montmorency, with all his talent, was persecuted by fortune,—the chivalrous Henry La Roche-Jacquelin, whose call upon his soldiers was—« If I fly, slay me—if I advance, follow me—if I fall, avenge me;» with other names distinguished[1]

[1] The Memoirs of Madame Bonchamp, and still more those of La Roche-Jacquelin, are remarkable for the virtues of the heart, as well as the talents, which are displayed by their authors. Without affectation, without vanity, without violence or impotent repining, these ladies have

in the roll of fame, and not the less so that they have been recorded by the pen of affection.

The object of the insurrection was announced in the title of The Royal and Catholic Army, assumed by the Vendeans. In their moments of highest hope their wishes were singularly modest. Had they gained Paris, and replaced the royal authority in France, they meditated the following simple boons:—1. They had resolved to petition, that the name of La Vendée be given to the Bocage and its dependencies, which should be united under a separate administration, instead of forming, as at present, a part of three distinct provinces.—2. That the restored monarch would honour the Bocage with a visit.—3. That in remembrance of the loyal services of the country, a white flag should be displayed from each steeple, and the king should add a cohort of Vendeans to his body guard.—4. That former useful projects of improving the navigation of the Loire and its canals, should be perfected by the government. So little of selfish hope or ambition was connected with the public spirit of these patriarchal warriors.

The war of La Vendée was waged with va-

described the sanguinary and irregular warfare, in which they and those who were dearest to them were engaged for so long and stormy a period; and we arise from the perusal sadder and wiser, by having learned what the brave can dare, and what the gentle can endure with patience.

rious fate for nearly two years, during which the insurgents, or brigands as they were termed, gained by far the greater number of advantages, though with means infinitely inferior to those of the government, which detached against them one general after another, at the head of numerous armies, with equally indifferent success. Most of the Republicans intrusted with this fatal command suffered by the guillotine, for not having done that which circumstances rendered impossible.

Upwards of two hundred battles and skirmishes were fought in this devoted country. The revolutionary fever was in its access; the shedding of blood seemed to have become positive pleasure to the perpetrators of slaughter, and was varied by each invention which cruelty could invent to give it new zest. The habitations of the Vendeans were destroyed, their families subjected to violation and massacre, their cattle houghed and slaughtered, and their crops burnt and wasted. One Republican column assumed and merited the name of the Infernal, by the horrid atrocities which they committed. At Pillau, they roasted the women and children in a heated oven. Many similar horrors could be added, did not the heart and hand recoil from the task. Without quoting any more special instances of horror, we use the words of a Republican eye-witness, to ex-

press the general spectacle presented by the theatre of civil conflict.

« I did not see a single male being at the towns of Saint Amand, Chantonnay, or les Herbiers. A few women alone had escaped the sword. Country-seats, cottages, habitations of whichever kind, were burnt. The herds and flocks were wandering in terror around their usual places of shelter, now smoking in ruins. I was surprised by night, but the wavering and dismal blaze of conflagration afforded light over the country. To the bleating of the disturbed flocks, and bellowing of the terrified cattle, was joined the deep hoarse notes of carrion crows, and the yells of wild animals coming from the recesses of the woods to prey on the carcasses of the slain. At length a distant column of fire, widening and increasing as I approached, served me as a beacon. It was the town of Mortagne in flames. When I arrived there, no living creatures were to be seen, save a few wretched women, who were striving to save some remnants of their property from the general conflagration.»[1]

Such is civil war; and to this pass had its extremities reduced the smiling, peaceful, and virtuous country, which we have described a few pages before.

[1] Mémoires d'un ancien Administrateur des Armées Républicaines.

It is no wonder, after such events, that the hearts of the peasants became hardened in turn, and that they executed fearful vengeance on those who could not have the face to expect mercy. We read, therefore, without surprise, that the Republican General Haxo, a man of great military talent, and who had distinguished himself in the Vendean war, shot himself through the head when he saw his army defeated by the insurgents, rather than encounter their vengeance.

During the superiority of the Vendeans, it may be asked why their efforts, so gigantic in themselves, never extended beyond the frontier of their own country; and why an insurrection, so considerable and so sustained, neither made any great impression on the French Convention, where they were spoken of only as a handful of brigands, nor on foreign nations, by whom their existence, far less their success, seems hardly to have been known? On the former subject, it is perhaps sufficient to observe, that the war of the Vendeans, and their mode of conducting it, so formidable in their own country, became almost nugatory when extended into districts of an open character, and affording high-roads and plains, by which cavalry and artillery could act against peasants, who formed no close ranks, and carried no bayonets. Besides, the Vendeans remained bound to their ordinary occupation—they were

necessarily children of the soil—and their army usually dispersed after the battle was over, to look after their cattle, cultivate the plot of arable land, and attend to their families. The discipline of their array, in which mere good-will supplied the place of the usual distinctions of rank, would not have been sufficient to keep them united in long and distant marches, and they must have found the want of a commissariat, a train of baggage, field-pieces, a general staff, and all the other accompaniments of a regular army, which, in the difficult country of La Vendée, familiar to the natives, and unknown to strangers, could be so easily dispensed with. In a word, an army which, under circumstances of hope and excitation, might one day amount to thirty or forty thousand, and on the next be diminished to the tenth part of the number, might be excellent for fighting battles, but could not be relied on for making conquests, or securing the advantages of victory.

It is not but that a man of d'Elbée's knowledge in the art of war, who acted as one of their principal leaders, meditated higher objects for the Vendeans than merely the defence of their own province.

A superb prospect offered itself to them by a meditated attack on the town of Nantes. Upon the success of this attempt turned per-

haps the fate of the Revolution. This beautiful and important commercial city is situated on the right bank of the Loire, which is there a fine navigable river, about twenty-seven miles from its junction with the sea. It is without fortifications of any regular description, but had a garrison of perhaps ten thousand men, and was covered by such hasty works of defence as time had permitted them to erect. The force of the Vendeans by which it was attacked has been estimated so high as thirty or forty thousand men under d'Elbée, while the place was blockaded on the left bank by Charette, and an army of royalists equal in number to the actual assailants. Had this important place been gained, it would probably have changed the face of the war. One or more of the French princes might have resorted there with such adherents as they had then in arms. The Loire was open to succours from England, the indecision of whose cabinet might have been determined by a success so important. Bretagne and Normandy, already strongly disposed to the royal cause, would have, upon such encouragement, risen in mass upon the Republicans; and as Poitou and Anjou were already in possession of The Royal and Catholic Army, they might probably have opened a march upon Paris, distracted as the capital then was by civil and foreign war.

Accordingly,[1] the rockets which were thrown up, and the sound of innumerable bugle-horns, intimated to General Canclaux, who commanded the town, that he was to repel a general attack of the Vendeans. Fortunately for the infant republic, he was a man of military skill and high courage, and by his dexterous use of such means of defence as the place afforded, and particularly by a great superiority of artillery, he was enabled to baffle the attacks of the Vendeans, although they penetrated, with the utmost courage, into the suburbs, and engaged at close quarters the Republican troops. They were compelled to retreat after a fierce combat, which lasted from three in the morning till four in the afternoon.[2]

At different times after the failure of this bold and well-imagined attempt, opportunities occurred during which the allies, and the English government in particular, might have thrown important succours into La Vendée. The island of Noirmoutier was for some time

[1] 18th June, 1793.

[2] A picture by Vernet, representing the attack on Nantes, estimable as a work of art, but extremely curious in a historical point of view, used to be in the Luxembourg palace, and is probably now removed to the Louvre. The Vendeans are presented there in all their simplicity of attire, and devoted valour; the priests who attended them displaying their crosses, and encouraging the assault, which is, on the other hand, repelled by the regular steadiness of the Republican forces.

in possession of the Royalists, when arms and money might have been supplied to them to any amount. Auxiliary forces would probably have been of little service, considering in what sort of country they were to be engaged, and with what species of troops they were to act. At least it would have required the talents of a Peterborough or a Montrose, in a foreign commander, to have freed himself sufficiently from the trammels of military pedantry, and availed himself of the peculiar qualities of such troops as the Vendeans, irresistible after their own fashion, but of a character the most opposite possible to the ideas of excellence entertained by a mere martinet.

But it is now well known, there was a division in the British cabinet concerning the mode of carrying on the war. Pitt was extremely unwilling to interfere with the internal government of France. He desired to see the Barrier of Flanders (so foolishly thrown open by the Emperor Joseph) again re-established, and he hoped, from the success of the allied arms, that this might be attained,—that the French lust for attacking their neighbours might be ended—their wildness for crusading in the cause of innovation checked, and some political advances to a regular government effected. On the other hand, the enthusiastic, ingenious, but somewhat extravagant opinions of Windham, led him to espouse those of Burke in

their utmost extent; and he recommended to England, as to Europe, the replacing the Bourbons, with the ancient royal government and constitution, as the fundamental principle on which the war should be waged. This variance of opinion so far divided the British counsels, that, as it proved, no sufficient efforts were made, either on the one line of conduct or the other.

Indeed, Madame La Roche-Jacquelin (who, however, we are apt to think, has been in some degree misled in her account of that matter) says, the only dispatches received by the Vendeans from the British cabinet, indicated a singular ignorance of the state of La Vendée, which was certainly near enough to Jersey and Guernsey, to have afforded the means of obtaining accurate information upon the nature and principles of the Vendean insurrection.

The leaders of The Royal and Catholic Army received their first communication from Britain through a Royalist emissary, the Chevalier de Tinténiac, who carried them concealed in the wadding of his pistols, addressed to a supposed chief named Gaston, whose name had scarce been known among them. In this document they were required to say for what purpose they were in arms, whether in behalf of the old government, or of the constitution of 1791, or the principles of the Girondists? These were strange questions to be asked of

men who had been in the field as pure Royalists for more than five months, who might have reasonably hoped that the news of their numerous and important victories had resounded through all Europe, but must at least have expected they should be well known to those neighbours of France who were at war with her present government. Assistance was promised, but in a general and indecisive way; nor did the testimony of Monsieur de Tinténiac give his friends much assurance that it was seriously proposed. In fact, no support ever arrived until after the first pacification of La Vendée. The ill-fated expedition to Quiberon, delayed until the cause of royalty was nigh hopeless, was at length undertaken, when its only consequence was that of involving in absolute destruction a multitude of brave and high-spirited men. But on looking back on a game so doubtful, it is easy to criticise the conduct of the players; and perhaps no blunder in war or politics is so common, as that which arises from missing the proper moment of exertion.

The French, although more able to seize the advantageous opportunity than we (for their government being always in practice something despotic, is at liberty to act more boldly, secretly, and decisively, than that of England), are nevertheless chargeable with similar errors. If the English cabinet missed

the opportunities given by the insurrection of La Vendée, the French did not more actively improve those afforded by the Irish rebellion; and if we had to regret the too tardy and unhappy expedition to Quiberon, they in their turn might repent having thrown away the troops whom they landed at Castlehaven, after the pacification of Ireland, for the sole purpose, it would seem, of surrendering at Ballinamuck.

It is yet more wonderful, that a country whose dispositions were so loyal, and its local advantages so strong, should not have been made by the loyalists in general the centre of those counter-revolutionary exertions which were vainly expended on the iron eastern frontier, where the fine army of Condé wasted their blood about paltry frontier redoubts and fortresses. The nobles and gentlemen of France, fighting abreast with the gallant peasants of La Vendée, inspired with the same sentiments of loyalty with themselves, would have been more suitably placed than in the mercenary ranks of foreign nations. It is certain that the late King, Louis XVIII., and also his present Majesty, were desirous to have exposed their persons in the war of La Vendée. The former wrote to the Duke d'Harcourt— « What course remains for me but La Vendée? —Who can place me there?—England—Insist upon that point; and tell the English ministers in my name, that I demand from them a crown

or a tomb.» If there were a serious intention of supporting these unfortunate princes, the means of this experiment ought to have been afforded them, and that upon no stinted scale. The error of England through all the early part of the war, was an unwillingness to proportion her efforts to the importance of the ends she had in view.

Looking upon the various chances which might have befriended the unparalleled exertions of the Vendeans, considering the generous, virtuous, and disinterested character of those primitive soldiers, it is with sincere sorrow that we proceed to trace their extermination by the blood-thirsty ruffians of the reign of terror. Yet the course of Providence, after the lapse of time, is justified even in our weak and undiscerning eyes. We should indeed have read with hearts throbbing with the just feelings of gratified vengeance, that Charette or La Roche-Jacquelin had successfully achieved, at the head of their gallant adherents, the road to Paris—had broke in upon Committees of Public Safety and Public Security, like Thalaba the Destroyer into the Dom-Daniel; and with the same dreadful result to the agents of the horrors with which these revolutionary bodies had deluged France. But such a re-action, accomplished solely for the purpose of restoring the old despotic monarchy, could not have brought peace to France or to Europe;

nay, could only have laid a foundation for farther and more lasting quarrels. The flame of liberty had been too widely spread in France to be quenched even by such a triumph of royalty as we have supposed, however pure the principles and high the spirit of the Vendeans. It was necessary that the nation should experience both the extremes, of furious license and of stern despotism, to fix the hopes of the various contending parties upon a form of government, in which a limited power in the monarch should be united to the enjoyment of all rational freedom in the subject. We return to our sad task.

Notwithstanding the desolating mode in which the Republicans conducted the war, with the avowed purpose of rendering La Vendée uninhabitable, the population seemed to increase in courage, and even in numbers, as their situation became more desperate. Renewed armies were sent into the devoted district, and successively destroyed in assaults, skirmishes, and ambuscades, where they were not slaughtered in general actions. More than a hundred thousand men were employed at one time in their efforts to subjugate this devoted province. But this could not last for ever; and a chance of war upon the frontiers, which threatened reverses to the Convention, compensated them by furnishing new forces, and of a higher description in point of character

and discipline, for the subjection of La Vendée.

This was the surrender of the town of Mentz to the Prussians. By the capitulation, a garrison of near fifteen thousand experienced soldiers, and some officers of considerable name, were debarred from again bearing arms against the allies. These troops were employed in La Vendée, where the scale had already begun to preponderate against the dauntless and persevering insurgents. At the first encounters, the soldiers of Mentz, unacquainted with the Vendean mode of fighting, sustained loss, and were thought lightly of by the Royalists.[1] This opinion of their new adversaries was changed, in consequence of a defeat near Chollet, more dreadful in its consequences than any which the Vendeans had yet received, and which determined their generals to pass the Loire with their whole collected force, leave their beloved Borage to the axes and brands of the victors, and carry the war into Bretagne, where they expected either to be supported by a descent of the English, or by a general insurrection of the inhabitants.

In this military emigration the Royalists were accompanied by their aged people, their wives, and their children; so that their melancholy march resembled that of the Cimbrians

[1] They punned on the word *Mayence* (Mentz), and said, the newly arrived Republicans were soldiers of *fayence* (potter's ware), which could not endure the fire

or Helvetians of old, when, abandoning their ancient dwellings, they wandered forth to find new settlements in a more fertile land. They crossed the river near Saint Florent, and the banks were blackened with nearly a hundred thousand pilgrims of both sexes, and of every age. The broad river was before them, and behind them their burning cottages and the exterminating sword of the Republicans. The means of embarkation were few and precarious; the affright of the females almost ungovernable; and such was the tumult and terror of the scene, that, in the words of Madame La Roche-Jacquelin, the awe-struck spectators could only compare it to the day of judgment. Without food, directions, or organization of any kind—without the show of an army, saving in the front and rear of the column, the centre consisting of their defenceless families marching together in a mass—these indomitable peasants defeated a Republican army under the walls of Laval.

The garrison of Mentz, whose arrival in La Vendée had been so fatal to the insurgents, and who had pursued them in a state of rout, as they thought, out of their own country, across the Loire, were almost exterminated in this most unexpected defeat. An unsuccessful attack upon Granville more than counterbalanced this advantage, and although the Vendeans afterwards obtained a brilliant victory at

Dol, it was the last success of what was termed the Great Army of La Vendée, and which well deserved that title, on more accounts than in its more ordinary sense. They had now lost, by the chances of war, most of their best chiefs; and misfortunes, and the exasperating feelings attending them, had introduced disunion, which had been so long a stranger to their singular association. Charette was reflected upon as being little willing to aid La Roche-Jacquelin; and Stofflet seems to have set up an independent standard. The insurgents were defeated at Mons, where of three Republican generals of name, Westerman, Marceau, and Kléber, the first disgraced himself by savage cruelty, and the other two gained honour by their clemency. Fifteen thousand male and female natives of La Vendée perished in the battle and the massacre which ensued.

But though La Vendée, after this decisive loss, which included some of her best troops and bravest generals, could hardly be said to exist, Charette continued, with indefatigable diligence, and undaunted courage, to sustain the insurrection of Lower Poitou and Bretagne. He was followed by a division of peasants from the Marais, whose activity in marshy grounds gave them similar advantages to those possessed by the Vendeans in their woodlands. He was followed also by the inhabitants of Morbihan, called, from their adherence to royalism.

the Little Vendée. He was the leader, besides, of many of the bands called Chouans, a name of doubtful origin given to the insurgents of Bretagne, but which their courage has rendered celebrated.[1] Charette himself, who, with these and other forces, continued to sustain the standard of royalty in Bretagne and Poitou, was one of those extraordinary characters, made to shine amidst difficulties and dangers. As prudent and cautious as he was courageous and adventurous, he was at the same time so alert and expeditious in his motions, that he usually appeared at the time and place where his presence was least expected and most formidable. A Republican officer, who had just taken possession of a village, and was speaking of the Royalist leader as of a person at twenty leagues' distance, said publicly,—« I should like to see this famous Charette. »—« There he is, » said a woman, pointing with her finger. In fact, he was at that moment in the act of charging the Republican troops, who were all either slain or made prisoners.

After the fall of Robespierre, the Convention made offers of pacification to Charette, which were adjusted betwixt the Vendean chief and General Canclaux, the heroic de-

[1] Some derived it from *Chat-huant*, as if the insurgents, like owls, appeared chiefly at night—others traced it to *Chouin*, the name of two brothers, said to have been the earliest leaders of the Breton insurgents.

fender of Nantes. The articles of treaty were subscribed in that place, which Charette entered at the head of his military staff, with his long white plume streaming in the wind. He heard with coldness shouts of welcome from a city, to which his name had been long a terror; and there was a gloom on his brow as he signed his name to the articles agreed upon. He certainly suspected the faith of those with whom he transacted, and they did not by any means confide in his. An armistice was agreed on until the Convention should ratify the pacification. But this never took place. Mutual complaints and recriminations followed, and the soldiers of Charette and of the Republic began once more to make a petty war on each other.

Meantime, that party in the British cabinet which declared for a descent on France, in name and on behalf of the successor to the crown, had obtained the acquiescence of their colleagues in an experiment of this nature; but unhappily it had been postponed until its success had become impossible. The force, too, which composed this experimental operation, was injudiciously selected. A certain proportion consisted of emigrants, in whom the highest confidence might be with justice reposed; but about two battalions of this invading expedition were vagrant foreigners of various descriptions, many or most of them en-

listed from among the prisoners of war, who readily took any engagement to get out of captivity, with the mental resolution of breaking it the first opportunity. Besides these imprudences, the purpose and time of executing a project, which, to be successful, should have been secret and sudden, were generally known in France and England before the expedition weighed anchor.

The event, as is universally known, was most disastrous: The mercenaries deserted to the Republicans as soon as they got ashore; and the unfortunate emigrants, who became prisoners in great numbers, were condemned and executed without mercy. The ammunition and muskets, of which a quantity had been landed, fell into the hands of the enemy; and what was worse, England did not, among other lighter losses, entirely save her honour. She was severely censured as giving up her allies to destruction, because she had yielded to the wishes which enthusiastic and courageous men had elevated into hope.

Nothing, indeed, can be more difficult, than to state the just extent of support which can prudently be extended by one nation to a civil faction in the bosom of another. Indeed, nothing short of success—absolute success—will prove the justification of such enterprises in the eyes of some, who will allege, in the event of

failure that men have been enticed into perils, in which they have not been adequately supported; or of others, who will condemn such measures as squandering the public resources, in enterprises which ought not to have been encouraged at all. But in fair judgment, the expedition of Quiberon ought not to be summarily condemned. It was neither inadequate, nor, excepting as to the description of some of the forces employed, ill calculated for the service proposed. Had such reinforcements and supplies arrived while the Royalists were attacking Nantes or Grenoble, or while they yet held the island of Noirmoutier, the good consequences to the royal cause might have been incalculable. But the expedition was ill-timed, and that was in a great measure owing to those unfortunate gentlemen engaged, who, impatient of inactivity, and sanguine by character, urged the British ministry, or rather Mr Windham, to authorise the experiment, without fully considering more than their own zeal and courage. We cannot, however, go so far as to say, that their impatience relieved ministers from the responsibility attached to the indifferent intelligence on which they acted. There could be no difficulty in getting full information on the state of Bretagne by way of Jersey; and they ought to have known that there was a strong French force collected

from various garrisons, for the purpose of guarding against a descent at Quiberon.[1]

After this unfortunate affair, and some subsequent vain attempts to throw in supplies on the part of the English, Charette still continued in open war. But Hoche, an officer of high reputation, was now sent into the disturbed districts, with a larger army than had yet been employed against them. He was thus enabled to form moveable columns, which acted in concert, supporting each other when unsuccessful, or completing each other's victory when such was obtained. Charette, after his band was almost entirely destroyed, was himself made prisoner. Being condemned to be shot, he refused to have his eyes covered, and died as courageously as he had lived. With him and Stofflet, who suffered a similar fate, the war of La Vendée terminated.

[1] We can and ought to make great allowances for national feeling; yet it is a little hard to find a well-informed historian, like Monsieur Lacretelle, gravely insinuate that England threw the unfortunate Royalists on the coast of Quiberon to escape the future burthen of maintaining them. Her liberality towards the emigrants, honourable and meritorious to the country, was entirely gratuitous. She might have withdrawn when she pleased a bounty conferred by her benevolence; and it is rather too hard to be supposed capable of meditating their murder, merely to save the expense of supporting them. The expedition was a blunder, but one in which the unfortunate sufferers contributed to mislead the British government.

To trace this remarkable civil war, even so slightly as we have attempted the task, has carried us beyond the course of our narrative. It broke out in the beginning of March, 1793, and Charette's execution, by which it was closed, took place at Nantes, 9th March, 1796. The astonishing part of the matter is, that so great a conflagration should not have extended itself beyond a certain limited district, while within that region it raged with such fury, that for a length of time no means of extinguishing it could be discovered.

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We now return to the state of France in spring, 1793, when the Jacobins, who had possessed themselves of the supreme power of the Republic, found that they had to contend, not only with the Allied Forces on two frontiers of France, and with the Royalists in the west, but also with more than one of the great commercial towns, which, with less inclination to the monarchical cause, than a general terror of revolutionary measures, prepared for resistance after the proscription of the Girondists upon the 31st of May.

Bordeaux, Marseilles, Toulon, and Lyons, had declared themselves against the Jacobin supremacy. Rich from commerce and their maritime situation, and, in the case of Lyons, from their command of internal navigation,

the wealthy merchants and manufacturers of those cities foresaw the total insecurity of property, and in consequence their own ruin, in the system of arbitrary spoliation and murder upon which the government of the Jacobins was founded. But property, for which they were solicitous, though, if its natural force is used in time, the most powerful barrier to withstand revolution, becomes, after a certain period of delay, its most helpless victim. If the rich are in due season liberal of their means, they have the power of enlisting in their cause, and as adherents, those among the lower orders, who, if they see their superiors dejected and despairing, will be tempted to consider them as objects of plunder. But this must be done early, or those who might be made the most active defenders of property will join with such as are prepared to make a prey of it.

We have already seen that Bordeaux, in which the Brissotins or Girondists had ventured to hope for a zeal purely republican, at once adverse to Royalty and to Jacobin domination, had effectually disappointed their expectations, and succumbed with little struggle under the ferocious victors.

Marseilles showed at once her good-will and her impotency of means. The utmost exertions of that wealthy city, whose revolutionary band had contributed so much to the downfal of the monarchy in the attack on the Tuileries, were

able to equip only a small and doubtful army of about 3000 men, who were dispatched to the relief of Lyons. This inconsiderable army threw themselves into Avignon, and were defeated with the utmost ease, by the republican general Cartaux, despicable as a military officer, and whose forces would not have stood a single *égaillement* of the Vendean sharp-shooters. Marseilles received the victors, and bowed her head to the subsequent horrors which it pleased Cartaux, with two formidable Jacobins, Barras and Fréron, to inflict on that flourishing city. The place underwent the usual terrors of Jacobin purification, and was for a time affectedly called, « the nameless commune. »

Lyons made a more honourable stand. That noble city had been subjected for some time to the domination of Châlier, one of the most ferocious, and at the same time one of the most extravagantly absurd, of the Jacobins. He was at the head of a formidable club, which was worthy of being affiliated with the mother society, and ambitious of treading in its footsteps; and he was supported by a garrison of two revolutionary regiments, besides a numerous artillery, and a large addition of volunteers, amounting in all to about ten thousand men, forming what was called a revolutionary army. This Châlier was an apostate priest, an atheist, and a thorough-paced pupil in the school of terror. He had been created Pro-

cureur of the Community, and had imposed on the wealthy citizens a tax, which was raised from six to thirty millions of livres. But blood as well as gold was his object. The massacre of a few priests and aristocrats confined in the fortress of Pierre-Ancise, was a pitiful sacrifice; and Châlier, ambitious of deeds more decisive, caused a general arrest of an hundred principal citizens, whom he destined as a hecatomb more worthy of the demon whom he served.

This sacrifice was prevented by the courage of the Lyonnois; a courage which, if assumed by the Parisians, might have prevented most of the horrors which disgraced the Revolution. The meditated slaughter was already announced by Châlier to the Jacobin Club. «Three hundred heads,» he said, «are marked for slaughter. Let us lose no time in seizing the members of the departmental office-bearers, the presidents and secretaries of the sections, all the local authorities who obstruct our revolutionary measures. Let us make one fagot of the whole, and deliver them at once to the guillotine.»

But ere he could execute his threat, terror was awakened into the courage of despair. The citizens rose in arms and besieged the Hôtel de Ville, in which Châlier, with his revolutionary troops, made a desperate, and for some time a successful, yet ultimately a vain

defence.[1] But the Lyonnois unhappily knew not how to avail themselves of their triumph. They were not sufficiently aware of the nature of the vengeance which they had provoked, or of the necessity of supporting the bold step which they had taken, by measures which precluded a compromise. Their resistance to the violence and atrocity of the Jacobins had no political character, any more than that offered by the traveller against robbers who threaten him with plunder and murder. They were not sufficiently aware, that, having done so much, they must necessarily do more They ought, by declaring themselves Royalists, to have endeavoured to prevail on the troops of Savoy, if not on the Swiss (who had embraced a species of neutrality, which, after the 10th of August, was dishonourable to their ancient reputation), to send in all haste soldiery to the assistance of a city which had no fortifications or regular troops to defend it; but which possessed, nevertheless, treasures to pay their auxiliaries, and strong hands and able officers to avail themselves of the localities of their situation, which, when well defended, are sometimes as formidable as the regular protection erected by scientific engineers.

The people of Lyons vainly endeavoured to

[1] 29th May, 1793.

establish a revolutionary character for themselves, upon the system of the Gironde, two of whose proscribed deputies tried to draw them over to their unpopular and hopeless cause: and they inconsistently sought protection by affecting a republican zeal, even while resisting the decrees, and defeating the troops, of the Jacobins. There were undoubtedly many of Royalist principles among the insurgents, and some of their leaders were decidedly such; but these were not numerous or influential enough to establish the true principle of open resistance, and the ultimate chance of rescue, by a bold proclamation of the King's interest. They still appealed to the Convention as their legitimate sovereign, in whose eyes they endeavoured to vindicate themselves, and at the same time tried to secure the interest of two Jacobin deputies, who had countenanced every violence attempted by Châlier, that they might prevail upon them to represent their conduct favourably. Of course they had enough of promises to this effect, while Messrs Gautier and Nioche, the deputies in question, remained in their power; promises, doubtless, the more readily given, that the Lyonnois, though desirous to conciliate the favour of the Convention, did not hesitate in proceeding to the punishment of the Jacobin Châlier. He was condemned and

executed, along with one of his principal associates, termed Reard.

To defend these vigorous proceedings, the unhappy insurgents placed themselves under the interim government of a council, who, still desirous to temporize and maintain the Revolutionary character, termed themselves « The Popular and Republican Commission of Public Safety of the Department of the Rhine and Loire; » a title which, while it excited no popular enthusiasm, and attracted no foreign aid, no ways soothed, but rather exasperated, the resentment of the Convention, now under the absolute domination of the Jacobins, by whom every thing short of complete fraternization was accounted presumptuous defiance. Those who were not with them, it was their policy to hold as their most decided enemies.

The Lyonnois had indeed letters of encouragement, and promised concurrence, from several departments; but no effectual support was ever directed towards their city, excepting the petty reinforcement from Marseilles, which we have seen was intercepted and dispersed with little trouble by the Jacobin General Cartaux.

Lyons had expected to become the patroness and focus of an Anti-jacobin league, formed by the great commercial towns, against Paris and the predominant part of the Convention. She

found herself isolated and unsupported, and left to oppose her own proper forces and means of defence, to an army of sixty thousand men, and to the numerous Jacobins contained within her own walls. About the end of July, after a lapse of an interval of two months, a regular blockade was formed around the city, and in the first week of August hostilities took place. The besieging army was directed in its military character by General Kellermann, who, with other distinguished soldiers, had now begun to hold an eminent rank in the Republican armies. But for the purpose of executing the vengeance for which they thirsted, the Jacobins relied chiefly on the exertions of the deputies they had sent along with the commander, and especially of the representative Dubois Crancé, a man whose sole merit appears to have been his frantic Jacobinism. General Précy, formerly an officer in the royal service, undertook the almost hopeless task of defence, and, by forming redoubts on the most commanding situations around the town, commenced a resistance against the immensely superior force of the besiegers, which was honourable if it could have been useful. The Lyonnois, at the same time, still endeavoured to make fair weather with the besieging army, by representing themselves as firm Republicans. They celebrated as a public festival the anniversary of the 10th of August, while Dubois

Crancé, to show the credit he gave them for their republican zeal, fixed the same day for commencing his fire on the place, and caused the first gun to be discharged by his own concubine, a female born in Lyons. Bombs and red-hot bullets were next resorted to, against the second city of the French empire; while the besieged sustained the attack with a constancy, and on many parts repelled it with a courage, highly honourable to their character.

But their fate was determined. The deputies announced to the Convention their purpose of pouring their instruments of havoc on every quarter of the town at once, and when it was on fire in several places to attempt a general storm. « The city, » they said, « must surrender, or there shall not remain one stone upon another, and this we hope to accomplish in spite of the suggestions of false compassion. Do not then be surprised when you shall hear that Lyons exists no longer. » The fury of the attack threatened to make good these promises.

In the mean time the Piedmontese troops made a show of descending from their mountains to the succour of the city, and it is probable their interference would have given a character of royalism to the insurrection. But the incursion of the Piedmontese and Sardinians was speedily repelled by the skill of Kellermann, and produced no effect in favour of

the city of Lyons, except that of supporting for a time the courage of its defenders.

The sufferings of the citizens became intolerable. Several quarters of the city were on fire at the same time, immense magazines were burnt to the ground, and a loss incurred, during two nights' bombardment, which was calculated at two hundred millions of livres. A black flag was hoisted by the besieged on the Great Hospital, as a sign that the fire of the assailants should not be directed on that asylum of hopeless misery. The signal seemed only to draw the Republican bombs to the spot where they could create the most frightful distress, and outrage in the highest degree the feelings of humanity. The devastations of famine were soon added to those of slaughter; and after two months of such horrors had been sustained, it became obvious that farther resistance was impossible.

The military commandant of Lyons, Précy, resolved upon a sally, at the head of the active part of the garrison, hoping that, by cutting his way through the besiegers, he might save the lives of many of those who followed him in the desperate attempt, and gain the neutral territory of Switzerland, while the absence of those who had been actual combatants during the siege, might, in some degree, incline the Convention to lenient measures towards the

more helpless part of the inhabitants. A column of about two thousand men made this desperate attempt. But pursued by the Republicans, and attacked on every side by the peasants, to whom they had been represented in the most odious colours by the Jacobin deputies, and who were stimulated besides by the hope of plunder, scarcely fifty of the devoted body reached, with their leader, the protecting soil of Switzerland. Lyons reluctantly opened her gates after the departure of her best and bravest. The rest may be described in the words of Horace,—

> Barbarus heu cineres insistet victor, et urbem,
> ————————— dissipabit insolens.

The paralytic Couthon, with Collot d'Herbois, and other deputies, were sent to Lyons by the Committee of Public Safety, to execute the vengeance which the Jacobins demanded; while Dubois Crancé was recalled, for having put, it was thought, less energy in his proceedings than the prosecution of the siege required. Collot d'Herbois had a personal motive of a singular nature for delighting in the task intrusted to him and his colleagues. In his capacity of a play-actor, he had been hissed from the stage at Lyons, and the door to revenge was now open. The instructions of this committee enjoined them to take the most satisfactory revenge for the death of Châlier, and the in-

surrection of Lyons, not merely on the citizens, but on the town itself. The principal streets and buildings were to be levelled with the ground, and a monument erected where they stood, was to record the cause;—« *Lyons rebelled against the Republic—Lyons is no more.*» Such fragments of the town as might be permitted to remain, were to bear the name of Ville Affranchie. It will scarce be believed, that a doom like that which might have passed the lips of some Eastern despot, in all the frantic madness of arbitrary power and utter ignorance, could have been seriously pronounced, and as seriously enforced, in one of the most civilized nations in Europe; and that in the present enlightened age, men who pretended to wisdom and philosophy, should have considered the labours of the architect as a proper subject of punishment. So it was, however; and to give the demolition more effect, the impotent Couthon was carried from house to house, devoting each to ruin, by striking the door with a silver hammer, and pronouncing these words—« House of a rebel, I condemn thee in the name of the Law.» Workmen followed in great multitudes, who executed the sentence by pulling the house down to the foundations. This wanton demolition continued for six months, and is said to have been carried on at an expense equal to that which the superb military hospital, the Hôtel des

Invalides, cost its founder, Louis XIV. But Republican vengeance did not waste itself exclusively upon senseless lime and stone—it sought out sentient victims.

The deserved death of Châlier had been atoned by an apotheosis, executed after Lyons had surrendered; but Collot d'Herbois declared that every drop of that patriotic blood fell as if scalding his own heart, and that the murder demanded atonement. All ordinary process, and every usual mode of execution, was thought too tardy to avenge the death of a Jacobin proconsul. The judges of the revolutionary commission were worn out with fatigue—the arm of the executioner was weary—the very steel of the guillotine was blunted. Collot d'Herbois devised a more summary mode of slaughter. A number of from two to three hundred victims at once were dragged from prison to the Place des Brotteaux, one of the largest squares in Lyons, and there subjected to a fire of grape-shot. Efficacious as this mode of execution may seem, it was neither speedy nor merciful. The sufferers fell to the ground like singed flies, mutilated but not slain, and imploring their executioners to dispatch them speedily. This was done with sabres and bayonets, and with such haste and zeal, that some of the jailers and assistants were slain along with those whom they had assisted in dragging to death; and the mistake was not

discerned, until, upon counting the dead bodies, the military murderers found them amount to more than the destined tale. The bodies of the dead were thrown into the Rhone, to carry news of the Republican vengeance, as Collot d'Herbois expressed himself, to Toulon, then also in a state of revolt. But the sullen stream rejected the office imposed on it, and heaved back the dead in heaps upon the banks; and the Committee of Representatives was compelled at length to allow the relics of their cruelty to be interred, to prevent the risk of contagion.

The people of the south of France have always been distinguished by the vivacity of their temperament. As cruelties beget retaliation, it may be as well here mentioned, that upon the fall of the Jacobins, the people of Lyons forgot not what indeed was calculated for eternal remembrance, and took by violence a severe and sanguinary vengeance on those who had been accessary to the atrocities of Couthon and Collot d'Herbois. They rose on the Jacobins after the fall of Robespierre, and put to death several of them.

Toulon, important by its port, its arsenals, and naval-yard, as well as by its fortifications both on the sea and land side, had partaken deeply in the feelings which pervaded Marseilles, Bordeaux, and Lyons. But the insurgents of Toulon were determinedly royalist.

The place had been for some time subjected to the administration of a Jacobin Club, and had seen the usual quantity of murders and excesses with the greater pain, that the town contained many naval officers and others who had served under the King, and retained their affection for the royal cause. Their dissatisfaction did not escape the notice of men, to whom every sullen look was cause of suspicion, and the slightest cause of suspicion a ground of death. The town being threatened with a complete purificaton after the Jacobin fashion, the inhabitants resolved to anticipate the blow.

At the dead of night the tocsin was sounded by the citizens, who dispersed the Jacobin Club, seized on the two representatives who had governed its proceedings, arrested seven or eight Jacobins, who had been most active in the previous assassinations, and, in spite of some opposition, actually executed them. With more decision than the inhabitants of Lyons, they proceeded to proclaim Louis XVII. under the constitution of 1791. Cartaux presently marched upon the insurgent city, driving before him the Marseillois, whom, as beforementioned, he had defeated upon their march towards Lyons. Alarmed at this movement, and destitute of a garrison which they could trust, the Toulonnais implored the assistance of the English and Spanish Admirals, Lord

Hood and Gravina, who were cruising off their port. It was instantly granted, and marines were sent on shore for their immediate protection, while efforts were made to collect from the different allied powers such a supply of troops, as could be immediately thrown into the place. But the event of the siege of Toulon brings our general historical sketch into connexion with the life of that wonderful person, whose actions we have undertaken to record. It was during this siege that the light was first distinguished, which, broadening more and more, and blazing brighter and brighter, was at length to fill with its lustre the whole hemisphere of Europe, and was then to set with a rapidity equal to that with which it had arisen.

Ere, however, we produce this first-rate actor upon the stage, we must make the reader still more particularly acquainted with the spirit of the scene.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Views of the British Cabinet regarding the French Revolution.—Extraordinary Situation of France.—Explanation of the Anomaly which it exhibited.—System of Terror.—Committee of Public Safety—Of Public Security.—David the Painter.—Law against suspected Persons.—Revolutionary Tribunal.—Effects of the Emigration of the Princes and Nobles.—Causes of the Passiveness of the French People under the Tyranny of the Jacobins.—Singular address of the Committee of Public Safety.—General Reflections.

It has been a maxim with great statesmen, that evil governments must end by becoming their own destruction, according to the maxim, *Res nolunt diu male administrari.* Pitt himself was of opinion, that the fury of the French Revolution would wear itself out; and that it already presented so few of the advantages and privileges of social compact, that it seemed as if its political elements must either altogether dissolve, or assume a new form more similar to that on which all other states and governments rest their stability. It was on this account that this great English statesman de-

clined assisting, in plain and open terms, the royal cause, and desired to keep England free from any pledge concerning the future state of government in France, aware of the danger of involving her in any declared and avowed interference with the right of a people to chuse their own system. However anxious to prevent the revolutionary opinions, as well as arms, from extending beyond their own frontier, it was thought in the British cabinet, by one large party, that the present frantic excess of republican principles must, of itself, produce a reaction in favour of more moderate sentiments. Some steady system for the protection of life and property was, it was said, essential to the very existence of society. The French nation must assume such, and renounce the prosecution of those revolutionary doctrines, for the sake of their own as well as of other countries. The arrangement must, it was thought, take place, from the inevitable course of human affairs, which, however they may fluctuate, are uniformly determined at length by the interest of the parties concerned.

Such was the principle assumed by many great statesmen, whose sagacity was unhappily baffled by the event. In fact, it was calculating upon the actions and personal exertions of a raving madman, as if he had been under the regulation of his senses, and acting upon principles of self-regard and self-preservation.

France continued not only to subsist, but to be victorious, without a government, unless the Revolutionary Committees and Jacobin Clubs could be accounted such—for the Convention was sunk into a mere engine of that party, and sanctioned whatever they proposed; without religion, which, as we shall see, they formally abolished; without municipal laws or rights, except that any one of the ruling party might do what mischief he would, while citizens, less distinguished for patriotism, were subjected, for any cause, or no cause, to loss of liberty, property, and life itself; without military discipline, for officers might be dragged from their regiments, and generals from their armies, on the information of their own soldiers; without revenues of state, for the depression of the assignats was extreme; without laws, for there were no ordinary tribunals left to appeal to; without colonies, ships, manufactories, or commerce; without fine arts, any more than those which were useful;—In short, France continued to subsist, and to achieve victories, although apparently forsaken of God, and deprived of all the ordinary resources of human wisdom.

The whole system of society, indeed, appeared only to retain some appearances of cohesion from mere habit, the same which makes trained horses draw up in something like order, even without their riders, if the trumpet

is sounded. And yet in foreign wars, notwithstanding the deplorable state of the interior, the Republic was not only occasionally, but permanently and triumphantly victorious. She was like the champion in Berni's romance, who was so delicately sliced asunder by one of the Paladins, that he went on fighting, and slew other warriors, without discovering for a length of time that he was himself killed.

All this extraordinary energy, was, in one word, the effect of TERROR. Death—a grave—are sounds which awaken the strongest efforts in those whom they menace. There was never anywhere, save in France during this melancholy period, so awful a comment on the expression of Scripture, « All that a man hath he will give for his life. » Force, immediate and irresistible force, was the only logic used by the government—Death was the only appeal from their authority—the guillotine the all-sufficing argument, which settled each debate betwixt them and the governed.

Was the exchequer low, the guillotine filled it with the effects of the wealthy, who were judged aristocratical in exact proportion to the extent of their property. Were these supplies insufficient, diminished as they were by peculation ere they reached the public coffers, the assignats remained, which might be multiplied to any quantity. Did the paper medium of circulation fall in the market to fifty under the

hundred, the guillotine was ready to punish those who refused to exchange it at par. A few examples of such jobbers in the public funds made men glad to give one hundred francs for state money, which they knew to be worth no more than fifty. Was bread awanting, corn was to be found by the same compendious means, and distributed among the Parisians, as among the ancient citizens of Rome, at a regulated price. The guillotine was a key to storehouses, barns, and granaries.

Did the army want recruits, the guillotine was ready to exterminate all conscripts who should hesitate to march. On the generals of the Republican army, this decisive argument, which, *a priori*, might have been deemed less applicable, in all its rigour, to them than to others, was possessed of the most exclusive authority. They were beheaded for want of success, which may seem less different from the common course of affairs;[1] but they were also guillotined when their successes were not improved to the full expectations of their masters.[2] Nay, they were guillotined, when, being too successful, they were suspected of

[1] The fate of Custine illustrates this,—a general who had done much for the Republic, and who, when his fortune began to fail him, excused himself by saying, Fortune was a woman, and his hairs were growing grey.

[2] Witness Houchard, who performed the distinguished service of raising the siege of Dunkirk, and who, during

having acquired over the soldiers who had conquered under them, an interest dangerous to those who had the command of this all-sufficing reason of state.[1] Even mere mediocrity, and a limited but regular discharge of duty, neither so brilliant as to incur jealousy, nor so important as to draw down censure, was no protection.[2] There was no rallying point against this universal, and very simple system—of main force.

The Vendeans, who tried the open and manly mode of generous and direct resistance, were, as we have seen, finally destroyed, leaving a name which will live for ages. The commercial towns, which, upon a scale more modified, also tried their strength with the revolutionary torrent, were successively overpowered. One can, therefore, be no more surprised that the rest of the nation gave way to predominant force, than we are daily at seeing a herd of strong and able-bodied cattle driven to the shambles before one or two but-

his trial, could be hardly made to understand that he was to suffer for not carrying his victory still farther.

[1] Several generals of reputation sustained capital punishment from no other reason than the jealousy of the committees of their influence with the army.

[2] Luckner, an old German thick-headed soldier, who was of no party, and scrupulously obeyed the command of whichever was uppermost at Paris, had no better fate than others.

chers, and as many bull-dogs. As the victims approach the slaughter-house, and smell the blood of those which have suffered the fate to which they are destined, they may be often observed to hesitate, start, roar, and bellow, and intimate their dread of the fatal spot, and instinctive desire to escape from it; but the cudgels of their drivers, and the fangs of the mastiffs, seldom fail to compel them forward, slavering, and snorting, and trembling, to the destiny which awaits them.

The power of exercising this tremendous authority over a terrified nation was vested in few hands, and rested on a very simple basis.

The Convention had, after the fall of the Girondists, remained an empty show of what it had once some title to call itself,—the Representative Body of the French Nation. The members belonging to The Plain, who had observed a timid neutrality betwixt The Mountain and the Girondists, if not without talent, were without courage to make any opposition to the former when triumphant. They crouched to their fate, were glad to escape in silence, and to yield full passage to the revolutionary torrent. They consoled themselves with the usual apology of weak minds—that they submitted to what they could not prevent; and their adversaries, while despising them, were yet tolerant of their presence, and somewhat indulgent to their scruples, because,

while these timid neutrals remained in their ranks, they furnished to the eye at least the appearance of a full senate, filled the ranks of the representative body, as a garment is stuffed out to the required size by buckram, and countenanced by their passive acquiescence the measures which they most detested in their hearts. It was worth the while of The Mountain to endure the imbecility of such associates, and even to permit occasionally some diffident opposition on their part, had it only been to preserve appearances, and afford a show of a free assemby debating on the affairs of the nation. Thus, although the name of the National Convention was generally used, its deputies, carefully selected from the Jacobin or ruling party, were everywhere acting in their name, with all the authority of Roman proconsuls; while two-thirds of the body sate with submitted necks and padlocked lips, unresisting slaves to the minor proportion, which again, under its various fierce leaders, was beginning to wage a civil war within its own limited circle.

But the young reader, to whom this eventful history is a novelty, may ask in what hands was the real power of the government lodged, of which the Convention, considered as a body, was thus effectually deprived, though permitted to retain, like the apparition in Macbeth,—

—— upon its baby brow the round
And type of sovereignty.

France had, indeed, in 1793, accepted, with the usual solemnities, a new constitution, which was stated to rest on the right republican basis, and was alleged to afford, of course, the most perfect and absolute security for liberty and equality, that the nation could desire. But this constitution was entirely superseded in practice by the more compendious mode of governing by means of a junto, selected out of the Convention itself, without observing any farther ceremony. In fact, two small Committees, vested with the full powers of the state, exercised the powers of a dictatorship, while the representatives of the people, like the senate under the Roman empire, retained the form and semblance of supreme power, might keep their curule chairs, and enjoy the dignity of fasces and lictors, but had in their possession and exercise scarcely the independent powers of an English vestry, or quarter-sessions.

The Committee of Public Safety dictated every measure of the Convention, or more frequently acted without deigning to consult the Legislative Body at all. The number of members who exerted this executive government fluctuated betwixt ten and twelve; and, as they were all chosen Jacobins, and selected as men capable of going all the lengths of their

party, care was taken, by re-elections from time to time, to render the situation permanent. This body deliberated in secret, and had the despotic right of interfering with and controlling every other authority in the state; and before its absolute powers, and the uses which were made of them, the Council of Ten of the Venetian government might be thought a harmless and liberal institution. Another Committee, with powers of the same revolutionary nature, and in which the members were also renewed from time to time, was that of Public Security. It was inferior in importance to that of Public Safety, but was nevertheless as active within its sphere. We regret to record of a man of genius, that David, the celebrated painter,[1] held a seat in the Committee of Public Security. The fine arts, which he studied, had not produced on his mind the softening and humanising effect ascribed to them. Frightfully ugly in his exterior, his mind seemed to correspond with the harshness of his looks. « Let us grind enough of the Red?»[2] was the professional phrase of which he made use, when sitting down to the bloody work of the day.

That these revolutionary Committees might

[1] David is generally allowed to have possessed great merit as a draughtsman. Foreigners do not admire his composition and colouring so much as his countrymen.

[2] *Broyons du rouge.*

have in their hands a power subject to no legal defence or evasion on the part of the accused, Merlin of Douay, a lawyer, it is said, of eminence, framed what was termed the law against suspected persons, which was worded with so much ingenuity, that not only it enveloped every one who, by birth, friendship, habits of life, dependencies, or other ties, was linked, however distantly, with aristocracy, whether of birth or property, but also all who had, in the various changes and phases of the Revolution, taken one step too few in the career of the most violent patriotism, or had, though it were but for one misguided and doubtful moment, held opinions short of the most extravagant Jacobinism. This crime of suspicion was of the nature of the cameleon; it derived its peculiar shade or colour from the person to whom it attached for the moment. To have been a priest, or even an assertor of the rights and doctrines of christianity, was fatal; but in some instances, an overflow of atheistical blasphemy was equally so. To be silent on public affairs, betrayed a culpable indifference; but it incurred darker suspicion to speak of them otherwise than in the most violent tone of the ruling party. By a supplementary law, this spider's web was so widely extended, that it appeared no fly could be found insignificant enough to escape its meshes. Its general propositions were of a nature so

vague, that it was impossible they could ever be made subjects of evidence. Therefore they were assumed without proof; and at length, definition of the characteristics of suspicion seems to have been altogether dispensed with, and all those were suspected persons whom the revolutionary committees and their assistants chose to hold as such.

The operation of this law was terrible. A suspected person, besides being thrown into prison was deprived of all his rights, his effects sealed up, his property placed under care of the state, and he himself considered as civilly dead. If the unfortunate object of suspicion had the good fortune to be set at liberty, it was no security whatever against his being again arrested on the day following. There was, indeed, no end to the various shades of sophistry which brought almost every kind of person under this oppressive law, so ample was its scope, and undefined its objects.

That the administrators of this law of suspicion might not have too much trouble in seeking for victims, all householders were obliged to publish on the outside of their doors a list of the names and description of their inmates. Domestic security, the most precious of all rights to a people who know what freedom really is, was violated on every occasion, even the slightest, by domiciliary visits. The number of arrests which took place through

France choked the prisons anew which had been so fearfully emptied on the 2d and 3d of September, and is said to have been only moderately computed at three hundred thousand souls, one-third of whom were women. The Jacobins, however, found a mode of jail-delivery less summary than by direct massacre; although differing so little from it in every other respect, that a victim might have had pretty nearly the same chance of a fair trial before Maillard and his men of September, as from the Revolutionary Tribunal. It requires an effort even to write that word, from the extremities of guilt and horror which it recals. But it is the lot of humanity to record its own greatest disgraces; and it is a wholesome and humbling lesson to exhibit a just picture of those excesses, of which, in its unassisted movements, and when agitated by evil and misguiding passions, human nature can be rendered capable.

The extraordinary criminal Court, better known by the name of the Revolutionary Tribunal, was first instituted upon the motion of Danton. Its object was to judge of state crimes, plots, and attempts against liberty, or in favour of royalty, or affecting the rights and liberty of man, or in any way, more or less, tending to counteract the progress of the Revolution. In short, it was the business of this court to execute the laws, or inflict the sentence rather, upon such as had been arrested

as suspected persons; and they generally saw room to punish in most of the instances where the arresting functionaries had seen ground for imprisonment.

This frightful court consisted of six judges, a public accuser, and two assistants. There were twelve jurymen; but the appointment of these was a mere mockery. They were official persons, who held permanent appointments; had a salary from the state; and were in no manner liable to the choice or challenge of the party tried. It may be sure the jurors and judges were selected for their Republican zeal and steady qualities, and were capable of seeing no obstacle either of law or humanity in the path of their duty. This tribunal had the power of deciding without proof, — or cutting short evidence when in the progress of being adduced,—or stopping the defence of the prisoners at pleasure; privileges which tended greatly to shorten the forms of court, and aid the dispatch of business.

The Revolutionary Tribunal was in a short time so overwhelmed with work, that it became necessary to divide it into four sections, all armed with similar powers. The quantity of blood which it caused to be shed was something unheard of even during the proscriptions of the Roman Empire; and there were involved in its sentences crimes the most different, personages the most opposed, and

opinions the most dissimilar. When Henry VIII. roused the fires of Smithfield both against protestant and papist, burning at the same stake one wretch for denying the king's supremacy, and another for disbelieving the divine presence in the Eucharist, the association was consistency itself compared to the scenes presented at the Revolutionary Tribunal, in which Royalist, Constitutionalist, Girondist, Churchman, Theophilanthropist, Noble and *Roturier*, Prince and Peasant, both sexes and all ages, were involved in one general massacre, and sent to execution by scores together, and on the same sledge.

Supporting by their numerous associations the government as exercised by the Revolutionary Committees, came the mass of Jacobins, who, divided into a thousand clubs, emanating from that which had its meetings at Paris, formed the strength of the party to which they gave the name.

The sole principle of the Jacobinical institutions was to excite against all persons who had any thing to lose, the passions of those who possessed no property, and were, by birth and circumstances, brutally ignorant, and envious of the advantages enjoyed by the higher classes. All other governments have made individual property the object of countenance and protection; but in this strangely-inverted state of things, it seemed the object of con-

stant suspicion and persecution, and exposed the owner to perpetual danger. We have elsewhere said that equality (unless in the no less intelligible than sacred sense of equal submission to the law) is a mere chimera, which can no more exist with respect to property, than in regard to mental qualifications, or personal strength, beauty, or stature. Divide the whole property of a country equally among its inhabitants, and a week will bring back the inequality which you have endeavoured to remove; nay, a much shorter space will find the industrious and saving richer than the idle and prodigal. But in France, at the period under discussion, this equality, in itself so unattainable, had completely superseded even the principle of liberty, as a watchword for exciting the people. It was to sin against this leading principle to be possessed of, and more especially to enjoy ostentatiously, any thing which was awanting to your neighbour. To be richer, more accomplished, better bred, or better taught, subjected you to the law of suspicion, and you were conducted instantly before a Revolutionary Committee, where you were probably convicted of incivism; not for interfering with the liberty and property of others, but for making what use you pleased of your own.

The whole of the terrible mystery is included in two regulations, communicated by the

Jacobin Club of Paris to the Committee of Public Safety.—1. That when, by the machinations of opulent persons, seditions should arise in any district, it should be declared in a state of rebellion.—2. That the Convention shall avail themselves of such opportunity *to excite the poor to make war on the rich,* and to restore order at any price whatsoever.—This was so much understood, that one of the persons tried by the Revolutionary Tribunal, when asked what he had to say in his defence, answered, —« I am wealthy—what avails it to me to offer any exculpation when such is my offence?»

The Committees of Government distributed large sums of money to the Jacobin Club and its affiliated societies, as being necessary to the propagation of sound political principles. The clubs themselves took upon them in every village the exercise of the powers of government; and while they sat swearing, drinking, and smoking, examined passports, imprisoned citizens, and enforced to their full extent the benefits of liberty and equality. « Death or Fraternity» was usually inscribed over their place of assembly, which some one translated,—« Become my brother, or I will kill thee.»

These clubs were composed of members drawn from the lees of the people, that they might not, in their own persons, give an example contradicting the equality which it

was their business to enforce. They were filled with men without resources or talents, but towards whom the confidence of the deceived people was directed, from the conviction that, because taken from among themselves, they would have the interest of the lower orders constantly in view. Their secretaries, however, were generally selected with some attention to alertness of capacity; for on them depended the terrible combination which extended from the mother society of Jacobins in Paris, down into the most remote villages of the most distant provinces, in which the same tyranny was maintained by the influence of similar means. Thus rumours could be either circulated or collected with a speed and uniformity, which enabled a whisper from Robespierre to regulate the sentiments of the Jacobins at the most distant part of his empire; for his it unquestionably was, for the space of two dreadful years.

France had been subjected to many evils ere circumstances had for a time reduced her to this state of passive obedience to a yoke, which, after all, when its strength was fairly tried, proved as brittle as it was intolerable. Those who witnessed the tragedies which then occurred look back upon that period as the delirium of a national fever, filled with visions too horrible and painful for recollection, and which, being once wiped from the mind,

we recal with difficulty and reluctance, and dwell upon with disgust. A long course of events, tending each successively to disorganize society more and more, had unhappily prevented a brave, generous, and accomplished people from combining together in mutual defence. The emigration and forfeiture of the nobles and clergy had deprived the country at once of those higher classes, that right-hand file, who are bred up to hold their lives light if called on to lay them down for religion, or in defence of the rights of their country, or the principles of their own honour or conscience. Whatever may be thought of the wisdom or necessity of emigration, its evils were the same. A high-spirited and generous race of gentry, accustomed to consider themselves as peculiar depositaries of the national honour —a learned and numerous priesthood, the guardians of religious opinion—had been removed from their place, and society was so much the more weak and more ignorant for the want of them. Whether voluntarily abandoning or forcibly driven from the country, the expulsion of so large a mass, belonging entirely to the higher orders, tended instantly to destroy the balance of society, and to throw all power into the hands of the lower class, who, deceived by bad and artful men, abused it to the frightful excess we have described.

We do not mean to say that the emigrants

had carried with them beyond the frontiers all the worth and courage of the better classes in France, or that there were not, among men attached to the cause of liberty, many who would have shed their blood to have prevented its abuse. But these had been unhappily, during the progress of the Revolution, divided and subdivided among themselves, were split up into a variety of broken and demolished parties, which had repeatedly suffered proscription; and, what was worse, sustained it from the hand of each other. The Constitutionalist could not safely join in league with the Royalist, or either with the Girondist; and thus there existed no confidence on which a union could be effected, among materials repulsive of each other. There extended besides through France, far and near, that sorrow and sinking of the heart, which prevails amid great national calamities, where there is little hope. The state of oppression was so universal, that no one strove to remedy its evils more than they would have struggled to remedy the *malaria* of an infected country. Those who escaped the disorder contented themselves with their individual safety, without thinking of the general evil as one which human art could remedy, or human courage resist.

Moreover, the Jacobinical rulers had surrounded themselves with such a system of espionage and delation, that the attempt to or-

ganize any resistance to their power would have been in fact to fall inevitably and fatally under their tyranny. If the bold conspirator against this most infernal authority did not bestow his confidence on a false friend or a concealed emissary of the Jacobin party, he was scarce the safer on that account; for if he breathed forth in the most friendly ear any thing tending to reflect on the free, happy, and humane government under which he had the happiness to live, his hearer was bound, equally as a hired spy, to carry the purport of the conversation to the constituted authorities—that is, to the Revolutionary Committees or Republican Commissioners; and, above all, to the Committee of Public Safety. Silence on public affairs, and acquiescence in democratic tyranny, became, therefore, matter of little wonder; for men will be long mute, when to indulge the tongue may endanger the head. And thus, in the kingdom which boasts herself most civilized in Europe, and with all that ardour for liberty which seemed but of late to animate every bosom, the general apathy of terror and astonishment, joined to a want of all power of combination, palsied every effort at resistance. They who make national reflections on the French for remaining passive under circumstances so hopeless, should first reflect, that our disposition to prevent or punish crime, and our supposed readiness to resist oppression,

have their foundation in a strong confidence in the laws, and in the immediate support which they are sure to receive from the numerous classes who have been trained up to respect them, as protectors of the rich equally and of the poor. But in France the whole system of the administration of justice was in the hands of brutal force; and it is one thing to join in the hue and cry against a murderer, seconded by the willing assistance of a whole population—another to venture upon withstanding him in his den, he at the head of his banditti, the assailant defenceless, excepting in the justice of his cause.

It has further been a natural subject of wonder, not only that the richer and better classes, the avowed objects of Jacobin persecution, were so passively resigned to this frightful tyranny, but also why the French populace, whose general manners are so civilized and so kindly, that they are, on ordinary occasions, the gayest and best-humoured people in Europe, should have so far changed their character as to delight in cruelty, or at least to look on, without expressing disgust, at cruelties perpetrated in their name.

But the state of a people, in ordinary times and peaceful occupations, is in every country totally different from the character which they manifest under strong circumstances of excitation. Rousseau says, that no one who sees the

ordinary greyhound, the most sportive, gentle, and timid perhaps of the canine race, can form an idea of the same animal pursuing and strangling its screaming and helpless victim. Something of this sort must plead the apology of the French people in the early excesses of the Revolution; and we must remember, that men collected in crowds, and influenced with a sense of wrongs, whether real or imaginary, are acted upon by the enthusiasm of the moment; and are besides in a state of such general and undistinguishing fury, that they adopt, by joining in the clamours and general shouts, deeds of which they hardly witness the import, and which perhaps not one of the assembled multitude out of a thousand would countenance, were that import distinctly felt and known. In the revolutionary massacres and cruelties, there was always an executive power, consisting of a few well-breathed and thorough-paced ruffians, whose hands perpetrated the actions, to which the ignorant vulgar only lent their acclamations.

This species of assentation became less wonderful when instant slaughter, without even the ceremony of inquiry, had been exchanged for some forms, however flimsy and unsubstantial, of regular trial, condemnation, and execution. These served for a time to satisfy the public mind. The populace saw men dragged to the guillotine, convicted of criminal attempts,

as they were informed, against the liberty of the people; and they shouted as at the punishment of their own immediate enemies.

But as the work of death proceeded daily, the people became softened as their passions abated; and the frequency of such sacrifices having removed the odious interest which for a while attended them, the lower classes, whom Robespierre desired most to conciliate, looked on, first with indifference, but afterwards with shame and disgust, and at last with the wish to put an end to cruelties, which even the most ignorant and prejudiced began to regard in their own true undisguised light.

Yet the operation of these universal feelings was long delayed. To support the reign of Terror, the Revolutionary Committees had their own guards and executioners, without whom they could not have long withstood the general abhorrence of mankind. All official situations were scrupulously and religiously filled up by individuals chosen from the Sans-Culottes, who had rendered themselves, by their zeal, worthy of that honourable appellation. Were they of little note, they were employed in the various capacities of guards, officers, and jailers, for which the times created an unwearied demand. Did they hold places in the Convention, they were frequently dispatched upon commissions to different parts of France, to give new edge to the guillotine,

and superintend in person the punishment of conspiracy or rebellion, real or supposed. Such commissioners, or proconsuls as they were frequently termed, being vested with unlimited power, and fresh in its exercise, signalized themselves by their cruelty, even more than the tyrants whose will they discharged.

We may quote, in illustration, a remarkable passage in an address by the Commissioners of Public Safety, to the representatives absent upon commissions, in which there occur some gentle remarks on their having extended capital punishment to cases where it was not provided by law, although the lustre of their services to the Republic far outshone the shade of such occasional peccadilloes. For their future direction, they are thus exhorted. « Let your energy awaken anew as the term of your labour approaches. The Convention charges you to complete the purification and reorganization of the constituted authorities with the least possible delay, and to report the conclusion of these two operations before the end of the next month. A simple measure may effect the desired purification. *Convoke the people in the popular societies—Let the public functionaries appear before them—Interrogate the people on the subject of their conduct, and let their judgment dictate yours.*»[1] Thus, the wildest

[1] *Moniteur*, No. 995; Nivose, an II. 25th December 1793

prejudices arising in the Jacobin Club, consisting of the lowest, most ignorant, most prejudiced, and often most malicious members in society, were received as evidence, and the populace declared masters, at their own pleasure, of the property, honour, and life, of those who had held any brief authority over them.

Where there had occurred any positive rising or resistance, the [illegible] of the Commissioners was extended by all the powers that martial law, in other words, the rule of superior force, could confer. We have mentioned the murders committed at Lyons, but even these, though hundreds were swept away by volleys of musket-shot, fell short of the horrors perpetrated by Carrier at Nantes, who, in avenging the Republic on the obstinate resistance of La Vendée, might have summoned hell to match his cruelty, without a demon venturing to answer his challenge. Hundreds, men, women, and children, were forced on board of vessels, which were scuttled and sunk in the Loire, and this was called republican baptism. Men and women were stripped, bound together, and thus thrown into the river, and this was called republican marriage. But we have said enough to show that men's blood seems to have been converted into poison, and their hearts into stone, by the practices in which they were daily engaged. Many affected even a lust of cruel-

ty, and the instrument of punishment was talked of with the fondness and gaiety with which we speak of a beloved and fondled object. It had its pet name of the Little National Window, and others equally expressive; and although saints were not much in fashion, was, in some degree, canonized by the name of the Holy Mother Guillotine. That active citizen, the executioner, had also his honours, as well as the senseless machine which he directed. This official was admitted to the society of some of the more emphatic patriots, and, as we shall afterwards see, shared in their civic festivities. It may be questioned whether even *his* company was not too good for the patrons who thus regaled him.

There was also an armed force raised among the most thorough-paced and hardened satellites of the lower order, termed by pre-eminence the Revolutionary Army. They were under the command of Roussin, a general every way worthy of such soldiers. These troops were produced on all occasions, when it was necessary to intimidate the metropolis and the National Guard. They were at the more immediate disposal of the Commune of Paris, and were a ready, though not a great force, which always could be produced at a moment's notice, and were generally joined by the more active democrats, in the capacity of

a Jacobin militia. In their own ranks they mustered six thousand men.

It is worthy of remark, that some of the persons whose agency was distinguished during this disgraceful period, and whose hands were deeply dyed in the blood so unrelentingly shed, under whatever frenzy of brain, or state of a generally maddening impulse, they may have acted, nevertheless made amends in their after conduct for their enormities then committed. This was the case with Tallien, with Barras, with Fouché, Legendre, and others, who, neither good nor scrupulous men, were yet, upon many subsequent occasions, much more humane and moderate than could have been expected from their early acquaintance with revolutionary horrors. They resembled disbanded soldiers, who, returned to their native homes, often resume so entirely the habits of earlier life, that they seem to have forgotten the wild, and perhaps sanguinary character of their military career. We cannot, indeed, pay any of these reformed Jacobins the compliment ascribed to Octavius by the Romans, who found a blessing in the Emperor's benevolent government, which compensated the injuries inflicted by the Triumvir. But it is certain that, had it not been for the courage of Tallien and Barras in particular, it might have been much longer ere the French had been able to rid them-

selves of Robespierre, and that the revolution of 9th Thermidor, as they called the memorable day of his fall, was in a great measure brought about by the remorse or jealousy of the Dictator's old comrades. But ere we arrive at that more auspicious point of our story, we have to consider the train of causes which led to the downfall of Jacobinism.

Periods which display great national failings or vices are those also which bring to light distinguished and redeeming virtues. France unfortunately, during the years 1793 and 1794, exhibited instances of extreme cruelty, in principle and practice, which make the human blood curdle. She may also be censured for a certain abasement of spirit, for sinking so long unresistingly under a yoke so unnaturally horrible. But she has to boast that, during this fearful period, she can produce as many instances of the most high and honourable fidelity, of the most courageous and devoted humanity, as honour the annals of any country whatever.

The cruelty of the laws denounced the highest penalties against those who relieved proscribed fugitives. These were executed with the most merciless rigour. Madame Boucquey and her husband were put to death at Bordeaux for affording shelter to the members of the Gironde faction; and the interdic-

tion of fire and water to outlawed persons, of whatever description, was enforced with the heaviest penalty. Yet, not only among the better classes, but among the poorest of the poor, were there men of noble minds found, who, having but half a morsel to support their own family, divided it willingly with some wretched fugitive, though death stood ready to reward their charity.

In some cases, fidelity and devotion aided the suggestions of humanity. Among domestic servants, a race whose virtues should be the more esteemed, that they are practised sometimes in defiance of strong temptation, were found many distinguished instances of unshaken fidelity. Indeed, it must be said, to the honour of the French manners, that the master and his servant live on a footing of much more kindliness than attends the same relation in other countries, and especially in Britain. Even in the most trying situations, there were not many instances of domestic treason, and many a master owed his life to the attachment and fidelity of a menial. The feelings of religion sheltered others. The recusant and exiled priests often found among their former flock the means of concealment and existence, when it was death to administer them. Often, this must have flowed from grateful recollection of their former religious services—sometimes

from unmingled veneration for the Being whose ministers they professed themselves.[1] Nothing short of such heroic exertions, which were numerous (and especially in the class where individuals, hard pressed on account of their own wants, are often rendered callous to the distress of others), could have prevented France, during this horrible period, from becoming an universal charnel-house, and her history an unvaried kalendar of murder.

[1] Strangers are forcibly affected by the trifling incidents which sometimes recal the memory of those fearful times. A venerable French ecclesiastic being on a visit at a gentleman's house in North Britain, it was remarked by the family, that a favourite cat, rather wild and capricious in his habits, paid particular attention to their guest. It was explained, by the priest giving an account of his lurking in the waste garret, or lumber-room, of an artizan's house, for several weeks. In this condition he had no better amusement than to study the manners and habits of the cats which frequented his place of retreat, and acquire the mode of conciliating their favour. The difficulty of supplying him with food, without attracting suspicion, was extreme, and it could only be placed near his place of concealment in small quantities, and at uncertain times. Men, women, and children, knew of his being in that place; there were rewards to be gained by discovery, life to be lost by persevering in concealing him; yet he was faithfully preserved, to try upon a Scottish cat, after the restoration of the monarchy, the arts which he had learned in his miserable place of shelter during the reign of Terror. The history of the time abounds with similar instances.

## CHAPTER IX.

Marat, Danton, Robespierre.—Marat poniarded—Danton and Robespierre become Rivals.—Commune of Paris—their gross Irreligion.—Gobet.—Goddess of Reason.—Marriage reduced to a Civil Contract.—Views of Danton—and of Robespierre.—Principal Leaders of the Commune arrested—and Nineteen of them executed.—Danton arrested by the influence of Robespierre—and, along with Camille Desmoulins, Westerman, and La Croix, taken before the Revolutionary Tribunal, condemned, and executed.—Decree issued, on the motion of Robespierre, acknowledging a Supreme Being.—Cécilie Regnaud.—Gradual Change in the Public Mind.—Robespierre becomes unpopular—Makes every effort to retrieve his power.—Stormy Debate in the Convention.—Collot d'Herbois, Tallien, etc. expelled from the Jacobin Club at the instigation of Robespierre.—Robespierre denounced in the Convention on the 9th Thermidor (27th July), and, after furious struggles, arrested, along with his brother, Couthon, and Saint-Just.—Henriot, Commandant of the National Guard, arrested. Terrorists take Refuge in the Hôtel de Ville—Attempt their own lives.—Robespierre wounds himself—but lives, along with most of the others, long enough to be carried to the Guillotine, and executed.—His character—Struggles that followed his Fate. Final Destruction of the Jacobinical System—and return of Tranquillity.—Singular colour given to Society in Paris.—Ball of the Victims.

The reader need not be reminded, that the three distinguished champions who assumed

the front in the Jacobin ranks, were Marat, Danton, and Robespierre. The first was poniarded by Charlotte Corday, an enthusiastic young person, who had nourished, in a feeling betwixt lunacy and heroism, the ambition of ridding the world of a tyrant. Danton and Robespierre, reduced to a Duumvirate, might have divided the power betwixt them. But Danton, far the more able and powerful-minded man, could not resist temptations to plunder and to revel; and Robespierre, who took care to preserve proof of his rival's peculations, a crime of a peculiarly unpopular character, and from which he seemed to keep his own hands pure, possessed thereby the power of ruining him whenever he should find it convenient. Danton married a beautiful woman, became a candidate for domestic happiness, withdrew himself for some time from state affairs, and quitted the stern and menacing attitude which he had presented to the public during the earlier stages of the Revolution. Still his ascendancy, especially in the Club of Cordeliers, was formidable enough to command Robespierre's constant attention, and keep awake his envy, which was like the worm, that dieth not, though it did not draw down any indication of his immediate and active vengeance. A power, kindred also in crime, but more within his reach for the moment, was first to

be demolished, ere Robespierre was to meas e strength with his great rival.

This third party consisted of those who had possessed themselves of official situations in the Commune of Paris, whose civic authority, and the implement which they commanded in the Revolutionary army, commanded by Ronsin, gave them the power of marching, at a moment's warning, upon the Convention, or even against the Jacobin Club. It is true, these men, of whom Hébert, Chaumette, and others, were leaders, had never shown the least diffidence of Robespierre, but, on the contrary, had used all means to propitiate his favour. But the man whom a tyrant fears becomes, with little farther provocation, the object of his mortal enmity. Robespierre watched, therefore, with vigilance, the occasion of overreaching and destroying this party, whose power he dreaded; and, singular to tell, he sought the means of accomplishing their ruin in the very extravagance of their revolutionary zeal, which shortly before he might have envied, as pushed farther than his own. But Robespierre did not want sense; and he saw with pleasure Hébert, Chaumette, and their followers, run into such inordinate extravagancies, as he thought might render his own interference desirable, even to those who most disliked his principles, most abhorred the

paths by which he had climbed to power, and most feared the use which he made of it.

It was through the subject of religion that this means of ruining his opponents, as he hoped, arose. A subject, which one would have thought so indifferent to either, came to be on both sides the occasion of quarrel between the Commune of Paris and the Jacobin leader. But there is a fanaticism of atheism, as well as of superstitious belief; and a philosopher can harbour and express as much malice against those who persevere in believing what he is pleased to denounce as unworthy of credence, as an ignorant and bigoted priest can bear against a man who cannot yield faith to dogmata which he thinks insufficiently proved. Accordingly, the throne being totally annihilated, it appeared to the philosophers of the school of Hébert (who was author of the most gross and beastly periodical paper of the time, called the *Père Duchesne*), that in totally destroying such vestiges of religion and public worship as were still retained by the people of France, there was room for a splendid triumph of liberal opinions. It was not enough, they said, for a regenerate nation to have dethroned earthly kings, unless she stretched out the arm of defiance towards those powers which superstition had represented as reigning over boundless space.

An unhappy man, named Gobet, Constitu-

tional Bishop of Paris, was brought forward to play the principal part in the most impudent and scandalous farce ever acted in the face of a national representation.

It is said that the leaders of the scene had some difficulty in inducing the bishop to comply with the task assigned him, which, after all, he executed, not without present tears and subsequent remorse. But he did play the part prescribed. He was brought forward in full procession, to declare to the Convention, that the religion which he had taught so many years, was, in every respect, a piece of priestcraft, which had no foundation either in history or sacred truth. He disowned, in solemn and explicit terms, the existence of the Deity to whose worship he had been consecrated, and devoted himself in future to the homage of Liberty, Equality, Virtue, and Morality. He then laid on the table his Episcopal decorations, and received a fraternal embrace from the President of the Convention. Several apostate priests followed the example of this prelate.

The gold and silver plate of the churches was seized upon and desecrated; processions entered the Convention, travestied in priestly garments, and singing the most profane hymns; while many of the chalices and sacred vessels were applied by Chaumette and Hébert to the celebration of their own impious orgies. The

world, for the first time, heard an assembly of men, born and educated in civilization, and assuming the right to govern one of the finest of the European nations, uplift their united voice to deny the most solemn truth which man's soul receives, and renounce unanimously the belief and worship of a Deity. For a short time the same mad profanity continued to be acted upon.

One of the ceremonies of this insane time stands unrivalled for absurdity, combined with impiety. The doors of the Convention were thrown open to a band of musicians; preceded by whom, the members of the Municipal Body entered in solemn procession, singing a hymn in praise of liberty, and escorting, as the object of their future worship, a veiled female, whom they termed the Goddess of Reason. Being brought within the bar, she was unveiled with great form, and placed on the right hand of the President; when she was generally recognized as a dancing-girl of the Opera, with whose charms most of the persons present were acquainted from her appearance on the stage, while the experience of individuals was farther extended. To this person, as the fittest representative of that Reason whom they worshipped, the National Convention of France rendered public homage.

This impious and ridiculous mummery had a certain fashion; and the installation of the

Goddess of Reason was renewed and imitated throughout the nation, in such places where the inhabitants desired to show themselves equal to all the heights of the Revolution. The churches were, in most districts of France, closed against priests and worshippers—the bells were broken and cast into cannon—the whole ecclesiastical establishment destroyed—and the Republican inscription over the cemeteries, declaring death to be perpetual sleep, announced to those who lived under that dominion, that they were to hope no redress even in the next world.

Intimately connected with these laws affecting religion, was that which reduced the union of marriage, the most sacred engagement which human beings can form, and the permanence of which leads most strongly to the consolidation of society, to the state of a mere civil contract of a transitory character, which any two persons might engage in, and cast loose at pleasure, when their taste was changed, or their appetite gratified. If fiends had set themselves to work to discover a mode of most effectually destroying whatever is venerable, graceful, or permanent in domestic life, and of obtaining at the same time an assurance that the mischief which it was their object to create should be perpetuated from one generation to another, they could not have invented a more effectual plan than the degradation

of marriage into a state of mere occasional co-habitation, or licensed concubinage. Sophie Arnoult, an actress famous for the witty things she said, described the Republican marriage as the Sacrament of adultery.

These anti-religious and anti-social regulations did not answer the purpose of the frantic and inconsiderate zealots by whom they had been urged forward. Hébert and Chaumette had outrun the spirit of the time, evil as that was, and had contrived to get beyond the sympathy even of those, who, at heart as vicious and criminal as they, had still the sagacity to fear, or the taste to be disgusted with, this overstrained tone of outrageous impiety. Perhaps they might have other motives for condemning so gross a display of irreligion. The most guilty of men are not desirous, generally speaking, totally to disbelieve and abandon all doctrines of religious faith. They cannot, if they would, prevent themselves from apprehending a future state of retribution; and little effect as such feeble glimmering of belief may have on their lives, they will not in general willingly throw away the slight chance, that it may be possible on some occasion to reconcile themselves to the church or to the Deity. This hope, even to those on whom it has no salutary influence, resembles the confidence given to a sailor during a gale of wind, by his knowing that there is a port under his lee.

His purpose may be never to run for the haven, or he may judge there is great improbability that by doing so he should reach it in safety; yet still, such being the case, he would esteem himself but little indebted to any one who should blot the harbour of refuge out of the chart. To all those, who, in various degrees, received and believed the great truths of religion, on which those of morality are dependent, the professors of those wild absurdities became objects of contempt, dislike, hatred, and punishment.

Danton regarded the proceedings of Hébert and his philosophers of the Commune with scorn and disgust. However wicked he had shown himself, he was too wise and too proud to approve of such impolitic and senseless folly. Besides, this perpetual undermining whatever remained of social institutions, prevented any stop being put to the revolutionary movements, which Danton, having placed his party at the head of affairs, and himself nearly as high as he could promise to climb, was now desirous should be done.

Robespierre looked on these extravagant proceedings with a different and more watchful eye. He saw what Hébert and his associates had lost in popularity, by affecting the doctrines of atheism and utter profaneness; and he imagined a plan, first for destroying these blasphemers, by the general consent of

the nation, as noxious animals, and then of enlarging, and, as it were, sanctifying his own power, by once more connecting a spirit of devotion of some modified kind or other with the revolutionary form of government, of which he desired to continue the head.

It has even been supposed, that Robespierre's extravagant success in rising so much above all human expectation, had induced him to entertain some thoughts of acting the part of a new Mahomet, in bringing back religious opinion into France, under his own direct auspices. He is said to have countenanced in secret the extravagancies of a female called Catharine Théot, or Théos, an enthusiastic devotee, whose doctrines leaned to Quietism. She was a kind of Joanna Southcote, and the Aaron of her sect was Dom Gerle, formerly a Carthusian monk, and remarkable for the motion he made in the first National Assembly, that the catholic religion should be recognized as that of France.[1] Since that time he had become entirely deranged. A few visionaries of both sexes attended secret and nightly meetings, in which Théot and Dom Gerle presided. Robespierre was recognized by them as one of the elect, and is said to have favoured their superstitious doctrines. But whether the Dictator saw in them any thing more than tools,

[1] Vol. I. page. 232.

which might be applied to his own purpose, there seems no positive authority to decide. At any rate, whatever religious opinions he might have imbibed himself, or have become desirous of infusing into the state, they were not such as were qualified to modify either his ambition, his jealousy, or his love of blood.

The power of Hébert, Chaumette, and of the Community of Paris, was now ripe for destruction. Ronsin, with the other armed satellites of the revolutionary army, bullied indeed, and spoke about taking the part of the magistracy of Paris against the Convention; but though they had the master and active ruffians still at their service, they could no longer command the long sable columns of pikes, which used to follow and back them, and without whose aid they feared they might not be found equal in number to face the National Guard. So early as 27th December, 1793, we find Chaumette expressing himself to the Commune as one who had fallen on evil times and evil days. He brought forward evidence to show, that it was not he who had conducted the installation of the Goddess of Reason in his native city of Nevers; and he complains heavily of his lot, that the halls were crowded with women demanding the liberty of their husbands, and complaining of the conduct of the Revolutionary Societies. It was plain that a change was taking place in the political atmo-

sphere, when Chaumette was obliged to vindicate himself from the impiety which used to be his boast, and was subjected besides to female reproach for his Republican zeal, in imprisoning and destroying a few thousand suspected persons.

The spirit of reaction increased, and was strengthened by Robespierre's influence now thrown into the scale against the Commune. The principal leaders in the Commune, many of whom seem to have been foreigners, and among the rest the celebrated Anacharsis Klootz, were arrested.[1]

The case of these men was singular, and would have been worthy of pity, had it applied to any but such worthless wretches. They were accused of almost every species of crime, which seemed such in the eyes of a Sans-Culotte. Much there was which could be only understood metaphysically, much there was of literal falsehood, but little or nothing like a distinct or well-grounded accusation of a specific criminal fact. The charge bore, that they were associates of Pitt and Coburg, and had combined against the sovereignty of the people—loaded them with the intention of starving thereby Paris—with that of ridiculing the Convention, by a set of puppets dressed up to imitate that scarce less passive Assembly

[1] 22d March, 1794.

—and much more to the same purpose, consisting of allegations that were totally unimportant, or totally unproved. But nothing was said of their rivalry to Robespierre, which was the true cause of their trial, and as little of their revolutionary murders, being the ground on which they really deserved their fate. Something was talked of pillage, at which Ronsin, the commandant of the Revolutionary Army, lost all patience. « Do they talk to me of pilfering? » he says.—« Dare they accuse such a man as I am of a theft of bed and body linen? Do they bring against me a charge of petty larceny—against *me*, who have had all their throats at my disposal? »

The accused persons were convicted and executed, to the number of nineteen. From that time the city of Paris lost the means of being so pre-eminent in the affairs of France, as her Commune had formerly rendered her. The power of the magistracy was much broken by the reduction of the Revolutionary Army, which the Convention dissolved as levied upon false principles, and as being rather a metropolitan than a national force, and one which was easily applied to serve the purposes of a party.

The Hebertists being removed, Robespierre had yet to combat and defeat a more formidable adversary. The late conspirators had held associations with the Club of Cordeliers, with which Danton was supposed to have particular

relations, but they had not experienced his support, which in policy he ought to have extended to them. He had begun to separate his party and his views too distinctly from his old friends and old proceedings. He imagined, falsely as it proved, that his bark could sail as triumphantly upon waves composed only of water, as on those of blood. He and others seem to have been seized with a loathing against these continued acts of cruelty, as if they had been gorged and nauseated by the constant repetition. Danton spoke of mercy and pardon; and his partisan, Camille Desmoulins, in a very ingenious parody upon Tacitus, drew a comparison between the tyrants and informers of the French Jacobin government, and those of the Roman Imperial Court. The parallels were most ably drawn, and Robespierre and his agents might read their own characters in those of the most odious wretches of that odious time. From these aggressions Danton seemed to meditate the part which Tallien afterwards adopted, of destroying Robespierre and his power, and substituting a mode of government which should show some regard at least to life and to property. But he was too late in making his movement; Robespierre was beforehand with him; and, on the morning of the 31st of March, the Parisians and the members of the Convention hardly dared whisper to each other, that Danton, whose

name had been as formidable as the sound of the tocsin, had been arrested like any poor ex-noble, and was in the hands of the fatal lictors. There was no end of exclamation and wonder; for Danton was the great apostle, the very Mahomet of Jacobinism. His gigantic stature, his huge and ferocious physiognomy, his voice which struck terror in its notes of distant thunder, and the energies of talent and vehemence mingled, which supplied that voice with language worthy of its deep tones, were such as became the prophet of that horrible and fearful sect. Marat was a madman, raised into consequence only by circumstances,—Robespierre a cold, creeping, calculating hypocrite, whose malignity resembled that of a paltry and second-rate fiend,—but Danton was a character for Shakspeare or Schiller to have drawn in all its broad lights and shades; or Bruce could have sketched from him a yet grander Ras Michael than he of Tigré. His passions were a hurricane, which, furious, regardless, and desolating in its course, had yet its intervals of sunshine and repose. Neither good by nature, nor just by principle or political calculation, men were often surprised at finding he still possessed some feelings of generosity, and some tendency even towards magnanimity. Early habits of profligate indulgence, the most complete stifler of human virtue, and his implication at the beginning of

his career with the wretched faction of Orleans, made him, if not a worse, certainly a meaner villain than nature had designed him; for his pride must have saved him from much, which he yielded to from the temptations of gross indulgence, and from the sense of narrow circumstances. Still when Danton fell under Robespierre, it seemed as if the mousing-owl had hawked at and struck an eagle, or at least a high-soaring vulture. His avowed associates lamented him of course; nay, Legendre and others, by undertaking his defence in the Convention, and arrogating for him the merit of those violent measures which had paved the way to the triumph of Jacobinism, showed more consistency in their friendship than these ferocious demagogues manifested on any other occasion.

Danton, before his fall, seemed to have lost much of his sagacity as well as energy. He had full warning of his danger from La Croix, Westerman, and others, yet took no steps either for escape or defence, though either seemed in his power. Still his courage was in no degree abated, or his haughty spirit tamed; although he seemed to submit passively to his fate with the disheartening conviction, which often unmans great criminals, that his hour was come.

Danton's process was, of course, a short one. He and his comrades, Camille Desmoulins, Wes-

terman, and La Croix, were dragged before the Revolutionary Tribunal, a singular accomplishment of the prophecy of the Girondist, Boyer Fonfrède. This man had exclaimed to Danton, under whose auspices that engine of arbitrary power was established, « You insist, then, upon erecting this arbitrary judgment-seat? Be it so; and, like the tormenting engine devised by Phalaris, may it not fall to consume its inventors? » As judges, witnesses, accusers, and guards, Danton was now surrounded by those who had been too humble to aspire to be companions of his atrocities, and held themselves sufficiently honoured in becoming his agents. They looked on his unstooping pride and unshaken courage, as timid spectators upon a lion in a cage, while they still doubt the security of the bars, and have little confidence in their own personal safety. He answered, to the formal interrogatories concerning his name and dwelling, « My dwelling will be soon with annihilation—my name will live in the Pantheon of History. » Camille Desmoulins, Hérault de Séchelles, Fabre d'Églantine, men of considerable literary talent, and amongst the few Jacobins who had any real pretension to such accomplishments, shared his fate. Westerman was also numbered with them, the same officer who directed the attack on the palace of the Tuileries on 10th August, and who afterwards was distinguish-

ed by so many victories and defeats in La Vendée, that he was called, from his activity, the scourge of that district.

Their accusation was, as in all such cases at the period, an olla podrida, if we can be allowed the expression, in which every criminal ingredient was mixed up; but so incoherently mingled and assembled together, so inconsistent with each other, and so obscurely detailed in the charge and in the proof, that it was plain that malignant falsehood had made the gruel thick and slab. Had Danton been condemned for his real crimes, the doom ought, in justice, to have involved judges, jurors, witnesses, and most of the spectators in the court.

Robespierre became much alarmed for the issue of the trial. The Convention showed reviving signs of spirit; and when a revolutionary deputation demanded, at the bar, « that death should be the order of the day, » and reminded them, that, « had they granted the moderate demand of three hundred thousand heads, when requested by the philanthropic, and now canonised Marat, they would have saved the republic the wars of La Vendée, » they were received with discouraging murmurs. Tallien, the president, informed them, « that not death, but justice, was the order of the day; » and the petitioners, notwithstanding the patriotic turn of their modest request, were driven from the bar with execrations.

This looked ill; but the power of Robespierre was still predominant with the Revolutionary Tribunal, and after a gallant, and unusually long defence (of which no notice was permitted to appear in the *Moniteur*), Danton and his associates were condemned, and carried to instant execution. They maintained their firmness, or rather hardenedness of character, to the last; and when Danton observed Fabre d'Églantine beginning to look gloomy, he cheered him with a play on words: « Courage, my friend,» he said, in his deep, sullen tone of voice, « we are all about to take up your trade—*Nous allons faire des* vers.» The sufferers on this occasion were men whose accomplishments and talents attracted a higher degree of sympathy, than that which had been given to the equally eloquent but less successful Girondists. Even honest men looked on the fate of Danton with some regret, as when a furious bull is slain with a slight blow by a crafty Tauridor; and many men of good feelings had hoped, that the cause of order and security might at least have been benefited in some degree, by his obtaining the victory in a struggle with Robespierre. Those, on the other hand, who followed the fortunes of the latter, conceived his power had been rendered permanent, by the overthrow of his last and most formidable rival, and exalted in proportion. Both were deceived in their calcula-

tions. The predominance of such a man as Danton might possibly have protracted the reign of Jacobinism, even by rendering it somewhat more endurable; but the permanent, at least the ultimate, success of Robespierre, was becoming more impossible, from the repeated decimations to which his jealousy subjected his party. He was like the wild chief, Lope d'Aguirre, whose story is so well told by Southey, who, descending the great river Orellana with a party of buccaneers, cut off one part of his followers after another, in doubt of their fidelity, until the remainder saw no chance for escaping a similar fate, unless by being beforehand with their leader in murder.

Alluding to Robespierre's having been the instrument of his destruction, Danton had himself exclaimed, « The cowardly poltroon! I am the only person who could have commanded influence enough to save him.» And the event showed that he spoke with the spirit of prophecy which the approach of fate has been sometimes thought to confer.

In fact, Robespierre was much isolated by the destruction of the party of Hébert, and still more by that of Danton and his followers. He had, so to speak, scarped away the ground which he occupied, until he had scarce left himself standing-room; and, detested by honest men, he had alienated, by his successive

cruelties, even the knaves who would otherwise have adhered to him for their own safety. All now looked on him with fear, and none dared hope at the hands of the Dictator a better boon than that which is promised to OUTIS, that he should be the last devoured.

It was at this period that Robespierre conceived the idea of reversing the profanities of Chaumette, Hébert, and the atheists, by professing a public belief in the existence of a Deity. This, he conceived, would at once be a sacrifice to public opinion, and, as he hoped to manage it, a new and potent spring, to be moved by his own finger. In a word, he seems to have designed to unite, with his power in the state, the character of High Pontiff of the new faith.

As the organ of the Committee of Public Safety, Robespierre, by a speech of great length, and extremely dull, undertook the conversion of the French nation from infidelity. Upon all such occasions he had recourse to that gross flattery, which was his great, rarely-failing, and almost sole receipt for popularity. He began by assuring them, that, in her lights, and the progress of her improvement, France had preceded the rest of Europe by a mark of at least two thousand years; and that, existing among the ordinary nations of the world, she appeared to belong to another race of beings. Still he thought some belief in a Deity would

do her no harm. Then he was again hurried away by his eloquence, of which we cannot help giving a literal specimen, to show at how little expense of sense, taste, or talent, a man may be held an excellent orator, and become dictator of a great nation :—

« Yes, the delicious land which we inhabit, and which Nature caresses with so much predilection, is made to be the domain of liberty and of happiness; and that people, at once so open to feeling and to generous pride, are born for glory and for virtue. O my native country! if fortune had caused my birth in some region remote from thy shores, I would not the less have addressed constant prayers to Heaven in thy behalf, and would have wept over the recital of thy combats and thy virtues. My soul would have followed with restless ardour every change in this eventful Revolution—I would have envied the lot of thy natives—of thy representatives. But I am myself a native of France—I am myself a representative. Intoxicating rapture!—O sublime people, receive the sacrifice of my entire being! Happy is he who is born in the midst of thee! More happy he who can lay down his life for thy welfare !»[1]

Such was the language which this great de-

[1] When we read such miserable stuff, and consider the crimes which such oratory occasioned, it reminds us of the opinion of a Mahomedan doctor, who assured

magogue held to the sublime people whose lives he disposed of at the rate of fifty per day, regular taskwork; and who were so well protected in person and property, that no man dared call his hat his own, or answer for ten minutes' space for the security of the head that wore it. Much there was, also, about the rashness of the worshippers of Reason, whose steps he accuses of being too premature in her cause—much about England and Mr Pitt, who, he says, fasted on account of the destruction of the catholic religion in France, as they wore mourning for Capet and his wife. But the summary of this extraordinary oration was a string of decrees, commencing with a declaration that the Republic of France acknowledged the existence of a Supreme Being, in the precise form in which the grand nation might have recognized the government of a co-ordinate state. The other decrees established the nature of the worship to be rendered to the Great Being whom these frail atoms had restored to his place in their thoughts; and this was to be expressed by dedicating a day in each decade to some peculiar and established Virtue, with hymns and processions in due honour of it, approaching as near to Paganism as could well be accomplished. The

Bruce that the Degial, or Antichrist, was to appear in the form of an ass, and that multitudes were to follow him to hell, attracted by the music of his braying.

last decree appointed a fête to be given in honour of the Supreme Being himself, as the nation might have celebrated by public rejoicings a pacification with some neighbouring power.

The speech was received with servile applause by the Convention. Couthon, with affected enthusiasm, demanded that not only the speech should be published in the usual form, by supplying each member with six copies, but that the plan should be translated into all languages, and dispersed through the universe.

The conducting of this heathen mummery, which was substituted for every external sign of rational devotion, was instrusted to the genius of the painter, David; and had it not been that the daring blasphemy of the purpose threw a chill upon the sense of ridicule, it was scarcely matched as a masquerade even by the memorable procession conducted by the notorious Orator of the Human Race.[1] There was a general muster of all Paris, divided into bands of young women and matrons, and old men and

[1] Poor Anacharsis Klootz. He had been expelled from the Jacobin Club as a Prussian, an ex-noble, and, what perhaps was not previously suspected, a person of fortune enough to be judged an aristocrat. His real offence was being a Hebertist, and he suffered accordingly with the leaders of that party.—This note was rather unnecessary; but Anacharsis Klootz was, in point of absurdity, one of the most inimitable personages in the Revolution.

youths, with oaken boughs and drawn swords and all other emblems appertaining to their different ages. They were preceded by the representatives of the people, having their hands full of ears of corn, and spices, and fruits; while Robespierre, their president, clad in a sort of purple garment, moved apart and alone, and played the part of Sovereign Pontiff.

After marching up and down through the streets, to the sound of doggrel hymns, the procession drew up in the gardens of the Tuileries, before some fireworks which had been prepared, and Robespierre made a speech, entirely addressed to the bystanders, without a word either of prayer or invocation. His acknowledgment of a Divinity was, it seems, limited to a mere admission in point of fact, and involved no worship of the great Being, whose existence he at length condescended to own. He had no sooner made his offering, than fire was set to some figures dressed up to resemble Atheism, Ambition, Egotism, and other evil principles. The young men then brandished their weapons, the old patted them on the head, the girls flung about their flowers, and the matrons flourished aloft their children, all as it had been set down in David's programme. And this scene of masking was to pass for the repentance of a great people turning themselves again to the Deity, whose wor-

ship they had forsaken, and whose being they had denied!

I will appeal—not to a sincere christian—but to any philosopher forming such idea of the nature of the Deity, as even mere unassisted reason can attain to, whether there does not appear more impiety in Robespierre's mode of acknowledging the Divinity, than in Hébert's horrible avowal of direct Atheism?

The procession did not, in common phrase, *take* with the people; it produced no striking effect—awakened no deep feeling. By catholics it was regarded with horror; by wise men of every or no principle as ridiculous; and there were politicians, who, under the disguise of this religious ceremony, pretended to detect further and deeper schemes of the dictator Robespierre. Even in the course of the procession, threats and murmurs had reached his ears, which the impatient resentment of the friends of Danton was unable to suppress; and he saw plainly that he must again betake himself to the task of murder, and dispose of Tallien, Collot d'Herbois, and others, as he had done successively of Hébert and Danton himself, or else his former victories would but lead to his final ruin.

Meanwhile the despot, whose looks made even the democrats of The Mountain tremble, when directed upon them, shrunk himself be-

fore the apprehended presence of a young female. Cécilie Regnaud, a girl, and, as it would seem, unarmed, came to his house and demanded to see Robespierre. Her manner exciting some suspicion, she was seized upon by the body-guard of Jacobins, who day and night watched the den of the tyrant, amidst riot and blasphemy, while he endeavoured to sleep under the security of their neighbourhood. When the young woman was brought before the Revolutionary Tribunal, she would return no answer to the question respecting her purpose, excepting that she wished to see « what a tyrant was like. » She was condemned to the guillotine of course; and about sixty persons were executed as associates of a conspiracy, which was never proved, by deed or word, to have existed at all. The victims were drawn at hazard out of the prisons, where most of them had been confined for months previous to the arrest of Cécilie Regnaud, on whose account they were represented as suffering.[1] Many have thought the crime entirely imaginary, and

[1] This unheard-of iniquity is stated in the report of the committee appointed to examine Robespierre's papers, of which Courtois was the reporter. It is rather a curious circumstance that, about the time of Cécilie Regnaud's adventure, there appeared, at a masked ball at London, a character dressed like the spectre of Charlotte Corday, come, as she said, to seek Robespierre, and inflict on him the doom of Marat.

only invented by Robespierre, to represent his person as endangered by the plots of the aristocracy, and attach to himself a part at least of the consequence, which Marat had acquired by the act of Charlotte Corday.

A few weeks brought on a sterner encounter than that of the supposed female assassin. The Terrorists were divided among themselves. The chosen and ancient bands of the 10th August, 2d September, 31st May, and other remarkable periods of the Revolution, continued attached to the Jacobins, and the majority of the Jacobin Club adhered to Robespierre; it was there his strength consisted. On the other hand, Tallien, Barras, Legendre, Fouché, and other of the Mountain party, remembered Danton, and feared for a similar fate. The Convention at large were sure to embrace any course which promised to free them from their present thraldom.

The people themselves were beginning to be less passive. They no longer saw the train of victims pass daily to the guillotine, in the Place de la Révolution, with stupid wonder, or overwhelming fear, but, on the contrary, with the sullenness of manifest resentment, that waited but an opportunity to display itself. The citizens in the Rue St Honoré shut up their shops at the hours when the fatal tumbrils passed to the scene of death, and that whole quarter of the city was covered with gloom.

These ominous feelings were observed, and the fatal engine was removed to a more obscure situation at the Barrière du Trone, near the Faubourg Saint Antoine, to the inhabitants of which it was thought a daily spectacle of this nature must be an interesting relief from labour. But even the people of that turbulent suburb had lost some of their Republican zeal —the men's feelings were altered. They saw, indeed, blood stream in such quantities, that it was necessary to make an artificial conduit to carry it off; but they did not feel that they, or those belonging to them, received any advantages from the number of victims, daily immolated, as they were assured, in their behalf. The constant effusion of blood, without plunder or license to give it zest, disgusted them, as it would have disgusted all but literal cannibals, to whose sustenance, indeed, the Revolutionary Tribunal would have contributed plentifully.

Robespierre saw all this increasing unpopularity with much anxiety. He plainly perceived that, strong as its impulse was, the stimulus of terror began to lose its effect on the popular mind; and he resolved to give it novelty, not by changing the character of his system, but by varying the mode of its application. Hitherto, men had only been executed for political crimes, although the circle had been so vaguely drawn, and capable of such extension

when desired, that the law regarding suspected persons was alone capable of desolating a whole country. But if the penalty of death were to be inflicted for religious and moral delinquencies, as well as for crimes directed against the state, it would at once throw the lives of thousands at his disposal, upon whom he could have no ready hold on political motives, and might support, at the same time, his newly-assumed characteras a reformer of manners. He would also thus escape the disagreeable and embarrassing necessity, of drawing lines of distinction betwixt his own conduct and that of the old friends whom he found it convenient to sacrifice. He could not say he was less a murderer than the rest of his associates, but he might safely plead more external decency of morals. His own manners had always been reserved and austere; and what a triumph would it have been, had the laws permitted him the benefit of slaying Danton, not under that political character which could hardly be distinguished from his own, but on account of the gross peculation and debauchery, which none could impute to the austere and incorruptible Robespierre.

His subordinate agents began already to point to a reformation of manners. Payan, who succeeded Hébert in the important station of Procureur to the Commune of the metropolis, had already adopted a very different

line from his predecessor, whose style derived energy by printing at full length the foulest oaths, and most beastly expressions, used by the refuse of the people. Payan, on the contrary, in direct opposition to Père Duchesne, is found gravely advising with the Commune of Paris, on a plan of preventing the exposing licentious prints and works to sale, to the evident danger of corrupting the rising generation.

There exists also a curious address from the Convention, which tends to evince a similar purpose in the framer, Robespierre. The guilt of profane swearing, and of introducing the sacred name into ordinary speech, as an unmeaning and blasphemous expletive, is severely censured. The using indecent and vicious expressions in common discourse is also touched upon; but as this unbounded energy of speech had been so very lately one of the most accredited marks of a true Sans-Culotte, the legislators were compelled to qualify their censure by admitting, that, at the commencement of the Revolution, the vulgar mode of speaking had been generally adopted by patriots, in order to destroy the jargon employed by the privileged classes, and to *popularize*, as it was expressed, the general language of society. But these ends being effected, the speech of Republicans ought, it is said, to be simple,

manly, and concise, but at the same time free from coarseness and violence.

From these indications, and the tenor of a decree to be hereafter quoted, it seems plain that Robespierre was about to affect a new character, not, perhaps, without the hope of finding a puritanic party in France, as favourable to his ambitious views as that of the independents was to Cromwell. He might then have added the word *virtue* to liberty and equality, which formed the national programme, and, doubtless, would have made it the pretext of committing additional crimes. The decree which we allude to was brought forward by the philanthropic Couthon; who, with his kindness of manner, rendered more impressive by a silver-toned voice, and an affectation of extreme gentleness, tendered a law, extending the powers of the Revolutionary Tribunal, and the penalty of death, not only to all sorts of persons who should in any manner of way neglect their duty to the Republic, or assist her enemies, but to the following additional classes: All who should have deceived the people, or their representatives — all who should have sought to inspire discouragement into good citizens, or to favour the undertakings of tyrants—all who should spread false news—all who should seek to lead astray the public opinion, and to prevent the instruction

of the people, or to debauch manners, and corrupt the public conscience; or who should diminish the purity of revolutionary principles by counter-revolutionary works, etc., etc., etc.

It is evident, that compared with a law couched in terms so vague and general, so obscure and indefinite, the description of crimes concerning suspected persons was broad sunshine; that there was no Frenchman living who might not be brought within the danger of the decree, under one or other of those sweeping clauses; that a loose or careless expression, or the repetition of an inaccurate article of news, might be founded on as corrupting the public conscience, or misleading the public opinion; in short, that the slightest indulgence in the most ordinary functions of speech might be brought under this comprehensive edict, and so cost the speaker his life.

The decree sounded like a death-knell in the ears of the Convention. All were made sensible that another decimation of the Legislative Body approached; and beheld with terror, that no provision was made in the proposed law for respecting the personal inviolability of the deputies, but that the obnoxious members of the Convention, without costing Robespierre even the formality of asking a decree from their complaisant brethren, might be transferred, like any ordinary individuals, to the butchery of the Revolutionary Tribunal, not only by the

medium of either of the committees, but at the instance of the public prosecutor, or even of any of their own brethren of the Representative Body, who were acting under a commission. Ruamps, one of the deputies, exclaimed, in accents of despair, that if this decree were resolved upon, the friends of liberty had no other course left than to blow their own brains out.

The law passed for the night, in spite of all opposition; but the terrified deputies returned to the attack next day. The measure was again brought into debate, and the question of privileges was evasively provided for. At a third sitting the theme was renewed; and, after much violence, the fatal decree was carried, without any of the clogs which had offended Robespierre, and he attained possession of the fatal weapon, such as he had originally forged it.

From this moment there was mortal though secret war betwixt Robespierre and the most distinguished members of the Assembly, particularly those who had sate with him on the celebrated Mountain, and shared all the atrocities of Jacobinism. Collot d'Herbois, the demolisher of Lyons, and regenerator of Ville Affranchie, threw his weight into the scale against his master; and several other members of both committees, which were Robespierre's own organs, began secretly to think on means of screening themselves from a power, which, like the

huge Anaconda, enveloped in its coils, and then crushed and swallowed, whatever came in contact with it. The private progress of the schism cannot be traced; but it is said that the Dictator found himself in a minority in the Committee of Public Safety, when he demanded the head of Fouché, whom he had accused as a Dantonist in the Convention and the Jacobin Club. It is certain he had not attended the meeting of the Committee for two or three weeks before his fall, leaving his interest there to be managed by Couthon and Saint Just.

Feeling himself thus placed in the lists against his ancient friends the Terrorists, the astutious tyrant endeavoured to acquire allies among the remains of the Girondists, who had been spared in contempt more than clemency, and permitted to hide themselves among the neutral party who occupied the Plain, and who gave generally their votes on the prudential system of adhering to the stronger side.

Finding little countenance from this timid and long-neglected part of the Legislative Body, Robespierre returned to his more steady supporters in the Jacobin Club. Here he retained his supremacy, and was heard with enthusiastic applause; while he intimated to them the defection of certain members of the legislature from the true revolutionary course; complained of the inactivity and lukewarmness of the Committees of Public Safety and Public Se-

curity, and described himself as a persecuted patriot, almost the solitary supporter of the cause of his country, and exposed for that reason to the blows of a thousand assassins.

« All patriots, » exclaimed Couthon, « are brothers and friends! For my part, I invoke on myself the poniards destined against Robespierre. »

« So do we all! » exclaimed the meeting, unanimously.

Thus encouraged, Robespierre urged a purification of the Society, directing his accusations against Fouché and other members of the Mountain; and he received the encouragement he desired.

He next ascertained his strength among the Judges of the Revolutionary Tribunal, and his willing agents among the reformed Commune of Paris, which, after the fall of Hébert and Chaumette, he had taken care to occupy with his most devoted friends. But still he knew that, in the storm which was about to arise, these out-of-door demagogues were but a sort of tritons of the minnows, compared to Tallien, Fouché, Barras, Collot d'Herbois, Billaud-Varennes, and other deputies of distinguished powers, accustomed to make their voices heard and obeyed amid all the roar of revolutionary tempest. He measured and remeasured his force with theirs; and for more than six weeks avoided the combat, yet without making any overtures

for reconciliation, in which, indeed, neither party would probably have trusted the other.

Meantime the Dictator's enemies had also their own ground on which they could engage advantageously in these skirmishes, which were to serve as preludes to the main and fatal conflict. Vadier, on the part of the Committee of Public Safety, laid before the Convention, in a tone of bitter satirical ridicule, the history of the mystical meetings and formation of a religious sect under Catharine Théot, whose pretensions have been already hinted at. No mention was indeed made of Robespierre, or of the countenance he was supposed to have given to these fanatical intriguers. But the fact of his having done so was well known; and the shafts of Vadier were aimed with such malignant dexterity, that, while they seemed only directed against the mystics of whom he spoke, they galled to the quick the High Pontiff, who had so lately conducted the new and singular system of worship which his influence had been employed to ingraft upon the genuine atheism natural to Jacobinism.

Robespierre felt he could not remain long in this situation—that there were no means of securing himself where he stood—that he must climb higher, or fall—and that every moment in which he supported insults and endured menaces, without making his vengeance felt, brought with it a diminution of his power.

He seems to have hesitated between combat and flight. Among his papers, according to the report of Courtois who examined them, was found an obscure intimation, that he had acquired a competent property, and entertained thoughts of retiring at the close of his horrible career, after the example of the celebrated Sylla. It was a letter from some unknown confidant, unsigned and undated, containing the following singular passage: « You must employ all your dexterity to escape from the scene on which you are now once more to appear, in order to leave it for ever. Your having attained the President's chair will be but one step to the guillotine, through a rabble who will spit upon you as you pass, as they did upon Égalité. Since you have collected a treasure sufficient to maintain you for a long time, as well as those for whom you have made provision, I will expect you with anxiety, that we may enjoy a hearty laugh together at the expense of a nation as credulous as it is greedy of novelty. » If, however, he had really formed such a plan, which would not have been inconsistent with his base spirit, the means of accomplishing it were probably never perfected.

At length his fate urged him on to the encounter. Robespierre descended to the Convention, where he had of late but rarely appeared, like the far nobler Dictator of Rome; and in his case also, a band of senators was

ready to poniard the tyrant on the spot, had they not been afraid of the popularity he was supposed to enjoy, and which they feared might render them instant victims to the revenge of the Jacobins. The speech which Robespierre addressed to the Convention was as menacing as the first distant rustle of the hurricane, and dark and lurid as the eclipse which announces its approach. Anxious murmurs had been heard among the populace who filled the tribunes, or crowded the entrances of the hall of the Convention, indicating that a second 31st of May (being the day on which the Jacobins proscribed the Girondists) was about to witness a similar operation.

The first theme of the gloomy orator was the display of his own virtues and his services as a patriot, distinguishing as enemies to their country all whose opinions were contrary to his own. He then reviewed successively the various departments of the government, and loaded them in turn with censure and contempt. He declaimed against the supineness of the Committees of Public Safety and Public Security, as if the guillotine had never been in exercise; and he accused the Committee of Finance of having *counter-revolutionized* the revenues of the Republic. He enlarged with no less bitterness on withdrawing the artillery-men (always violent Jacobins) from Paris, and on the mode of management adopted in the

conquered countries of Belgium. It seemed as if he wished to collect within the same lists all the functionaries of the state, and in the same breath to utter defiance to them all.

The usual honorary motion was made to print the discourse; but then the storm of opposition broke forth, and many speakers vociferously demanded, that before so far adopting the grave inculpations which it contained, the discourse should be referred to the two Committees. Robespierre, in his turn, exclaimed, that this was subjecting his speech to the partial criticism and revision of the very parties whom he had accused. Exculpations and defences were heard on all sides against the charges which had been thus sweepingly brought forward; and there were many deputies who complained in no obscure terms of individual tyranny, and of a conspiracy on foot to outlaw and murder such part of the Convention as might be disposed to offer resistance. Robespierre was but feebly supported, save by Saint-Just, Couthon, and by his own brother. After a stormy debate, in which the Convention were alternately swayed by their fear and their hatred of Robespierre, the discourse was finally referred to the Committees, instead of being printed; and the haughty and sullen Dictator saw, in the open slight thus put on his measures and opinions, the sure mark of his approaching fall.

He carried his complaints to the Jacobin Club, to repose, as he expressed it, his patriotic sorrows in their virtuous bosoms, where alone he hoped to find succour and sympathy. To this partial audience he renewed, in a tone of yet greater audacity, the complaints with which he had loaded every branch of the government, and the Representative Body itself. He reminded those around him of various heroic eras, when their presence and their pikes had decided the votes of the trembling deputies. He reminded them of their pristine actions of revolutionary vigour—asked them if they had forgot the road to the Convention, and concluded by pathetically assuring them, that if they forsook him, « he stood resigned to his fate; and they should behold with what courage he would drink the fatal hemlock.» The artist, David, caught him by the hand as he closed, exclaiming, in rapture at his elocution, « I will drink it with thee.»

The distinguished painter has been reproached, as having, on the subsequent day, declined the pledge which he seemed so eagerly to embrace. But there were many of his original opinion, at the time he expressed it so boldly; and had Robespierre possessed either military talents, or even decided courage, there was nothing to have prevented him from placing himself that very night at the

head of a desperate insurrection of the Jacobins and their followers.

Payan, the successor of Hébert, actually proposed that the Jacobins should instantly march against the two Committees, which Robespierre charged with being the focus of the anti-revolutionary machinations, surprise their handful of guards, and stifle the evil with which the state was menaced, even in the very cradle. This plan was deemed too hazardous to be adopted, although it was one of those sudden and master-strokes of policy which Machiavel would have recommended. The fire of the Jacobins spent itself in tumult and threatening, and in expelling from the bosom of their society Collot d'Herbois, Tallien, and about thirty other deputies of the Mountain party, whom they considered as specially leagued to effect the downfall of Robespierre, and whom they drove from their society with execrations and even blows.

Collot d'Herbois, thus outraged, went straight from the meeting of the Jacobins to the place where the Committee of Public Safety was still sitting, in consultation on the report which they had to make to the Convention the next day upon the speech of Robespierre. Saint Just, one of their number, though warmly attached to the Dictator, had been intrusted by the Committee with the

delicate task of drawing up that report. It was a step towards reconciliation; but the entrance of Collot d'Herbois, frantic with the insults he had received, broke off all hope of accommodation betwixt the friends of Danton and those of Robespierre. Collot d'Herbois exhausted himself in threats against Saint Just, Couthon, and their master, Robespierre, and they parted on terms of mortal and avowed enmity. Every exertion now was used by the associated conspirators against the power of Robespierre, to collect and combine against him the whole forces of the Convention, to alarm the deputies of the Plain with fears for themselves, and to awaken the rage of the Mountaineers, against whose throat the Dictator now waved the sword, which their short-sighted policy had placed in his hands. Lists of proscribed deputies were handed around, said to have been copied from the tablets of the Dictator: genuine or false, they obtained universal credit and currency; and those whose names stood on the fatal scrolls engaged themselves for protection in the league against their enemy. The opinion that his fall could not be delayed now became general.

This sentiment was so commonly entertained in Paris on the 9th Thermidor, or 27th July, that a herd of about eighty victims, who were in the act of being dragged to the guillotine, were nearly saved by means of it. The

people, in a generous burst of compassion, began to gather in crowds, and interrupted the melancholy procession, as if the power which presided over these hideous exhibitions had already been deprived of energy. But the hour was not come. The vile Henriot, commandant of the National Guards, came up with fresh forces, and, on the day destined to be the last of his own life, proved the means of carrying to execution this crowd of unhappy and doubtless innocent persons.

On this eventful day Robespierre arrived in the Convention, and beheld the Mountain in close array and completely manned, while, as in the case of Catiline, the bench on which he himself was accustomed to sit seemed purposely deserted. Saint Just, Couthon, Lebas (his brother-in-law), and the younger Robespierre, were the only deputies of name who stood prepared to support him. But could he make an effectual struggle, he might depend upon the aid of the servile Barrère, a sort of Belial in the Convention, the meanest, yet not the least able, amongst those fallen spirits, who, with great adroitness and ingenuity, as well as wit and eloquence, caught opportunities as they arose, and was eminently dexterous in being always strong upon the strongest, and safe upon the safest side. There was a tolerably numerous party ready, in times so dangerous, to attach themselves to Barrère, as a leader

who professed to guide them to safety, if not to honour; and it was the existence of this vacillating and uncertain body, whose ultimate motions could never be calculated upon, which rendered it impossible to presage with assurance the event of any debate in the Convention during this dangerous period.

Saint Just arose, in the name of the Committee of Public Safety, to make, after his own manner, not theirs, a report on the discourse of Robespierre on the previous evening. He had begun a harangue in the tone of his patron, declaring that, were the tribune which he occupied the Tarpeian rock itself, he would not the less, placed as he stood there, discharge the duties of a patriot.— « I am about, » he said, « to lift the veil. »—« I tear it asunder, » said Tallien, interrupting him. « The public interest is sacrificed by individuals, who come hither to speak exclusively in their own name, and conduct themselves as superior to the whole Convention. » He forced Saint Just from the tribune, and a violent debate ensued.

Billaud-Varennes called the attention of the Assembly to the sitting of the Jacobin Club on the preceding evening. He declared the military force of Paris was placed under the command of Henriot, a traitor and a parricide, who was ready to march the soldiers whom he commanded against the Convention. He denounced Robespierre himself as a second Catiline, artful as well as ambi-

tious, whose system it had been to nurse jealousies and inflame dissensions in the Convention, so as to disunite parties, and even individuals, from each other, attack them in detail, and thus destroy those antagonists separately, upon whose combined and united strength he dared not have looked.

The Convention echoed with applause every violent expression of the orator, and when Robespierre sprung to the tribune, his voice was drowned by a general shout of « Down with the tyrant! » Tallien moved the denunciation of Robespierre, with the arrest of Henriot, his staff-officers, and of others connected with the meditated violence on the Convention. He had undertaken to lead the attack upon the tyrant, he said, and to poniard him in the Convention itself, if the members did not show courage enough to enforce the law against him. With these words he brandished an unsheathed poniard, as if about to make his purpose good. Robespierre still struggled hard to obtain audience, but the tribune was adjudged to Barrère; and the part taken against the fallen Dictator by that versatile and self-interested statesman, was the most absolute sign that his overthrow was irrecoverable. Torrents of invective were now uttered from every quarter of the hall, against him whose single word was wont to hush it into silence.

The scene was dreadful; yet not without its

use to those who may be disposed to look at it as an extraordinary crisis, in which human passions were brought so singularly into collision. While the vaults of the hall echoed with exclamations from those who had hitherto been the accomplices, the flatterers, the followers, at least the timid and overawed assentators to the dethroned demagogue—he himself, breathless, foaming, exhausted, like the hunter of classical antiquity when on the point of being overpowered and torn to pieces by his own hounds, tried in vain to raise those screech-owl notes, by which the Convention had formerly been terrified and put to silence. He appealed for a hearing from the President of the Assembly, to the various parties of which it was composed. Rejected by the Mountaineers, his former associates, who now headed the clamour against him, he applied to the Girondists, few and feeble as they were, and to the more numerous but equally helpless deputies of the Plain, with whom they sheltered. The former shook him from them with disgust, the last with horror. It was in vain he reminded individuals that he had spared their lives, while at his mercy. This might have been applied to every member in the house; to every man in France; for who was it during two years that had lived on other terms than under Robespierre's permission? and deeply must he internally have regretted the clemen-

cy, as he might term it, which had left so many with ungashed throats to bay at him. But his agitated and repeated appeals were repulsed by some with indignation, by others with sullen, or embarrassed and timid silence.

A British historian must say, that even Robespierre ought to have been heard in his defence; and that such calmness would have done honour to the Convention, and dignified their final sentence of condemnation. As it was, they no doubt treated the guilty individual according to his deserts; but they fell short of that regularity and manly staidness of conduct which was due to themselves and to the law, and which would have given to the punishment of the demagogue the effect and weight of a solemn and deliberate sentence, in place of its seeming the result of the hasty and precipitate seizure of a temporary advantage.

Haste was, however, necessary, and must have appeared more so at such a crisis than perhaps it really was. Much must be pardoned to the terrors of the moment, the horrid character of the culprit, and the necessity of hurrying to a decisive conclusion. We have been told that his last audible words, contending against the exclamations of hundreds, and the bell which the President was ringing incessantly, and uttered in the highest tones which despair could give to a voice naturally shrill and discordant, dwelt long on the memory,

and haunted the dreams, of many who heard him :—« President of assassins, » he screamed, « for the last time I demand privilege of speech! »—After this exertion his breath became short and faint; and while he still uttered broken murmurs and hoarse ejaculations, the members of the Mountain called out, that the blood of Danton choked his voice.

The tumult was closed by a decree of arrest against Robespierre, his brother, Couthon, and Saint Just; Lebas was included on his own motion, and indeed could scarce have escaped the fate of his brother-in-law, though his conduct then, and subsequently, showed more energy than that of the others. Couthon, hugging in his bosom the spaniel upon which he was wont to exhaust the overflowing of his affected sensibility, appealed to his decrepitude, and asked whether, maimed of proportion and activity as he was, *he* could be suspected of nourishing plans of violence or ambition.—« Wretch, » said Legendre, « thou hast the strength of Hercules for the perpetration of crime. » Dumas, President of the Revolutionary Tribunal, with Henriot, Commandant of the National Guards, and other satellites of Robespierre, were included in the doom of arrest.

The officers of the Legislative Body were ordered to lay hands on Robespierre; but such was the terror of his name, that they hesitated

for some time to obey; and the reluctance of their own immediate satellites afforded the Convention an indifferent omen of the respect which was likely to be paid without doors to their decree against this powerful demagogue. Subsequent events seemed for a while to confirm the apprehensions thus excited.

The Convention had declared their sitting permanent, and had taken all precautions for appealing for protection to the large mass of citizens, who, wearied out by the reign of Terror, were desirous to close it at all hazards. They quickly had deputations from several of the neighbouring sections, declaring their adherence to the National Representatives, in whose defence they were arming, and (many undoubtedly prepared beforehand) were marching in all haste to the protection of the Convention. But they heard also the less pleasing tidings, that Henriot, having effected the dispersion of those citizens who had obstructed, as elsewhere mentioned, the execution of the eighty condemned persons, and consummated that final act of murder, was approaching the Tuileries, where they had held their sitting, with a numerous staff, and such of the Jacobinical forces as could hastily be collected.

Happily for the Convention, this commandant of the National Guards, on whose presence of mind and courage the fate of France perhaps for the moment depended, was as

stupid and cowardly as he was brutally ferocious. He suffered himself, without resistance, to be arrested by a few gendarmes, the immediate guards of the Convention, headed by two of its members, who behaved in the emergency with equal prudence and spirit.

But fortune, or the demon whom he had served, afforded Robespierre another chance for safety, perhaps even for empire; for moments which a man of self-possession might have employed for escape, one of desperate courage might have used for victory, which, considering the divided and extremely unsettled state of the capital, was likely to be gained by the boldest competitor.

The arrested deputies had been carried from one prison to another, all the jailers refusing to receive under their official charge Robespierre, and those who had aided him in supplying their dark habitations with such a tide of successive inhabitants. At length the prisoners were secured in the office of the Committee of Public Safety. But by this time all was in alarm amongst the Commune of Paris, where Fleuriot, the mayor, and Payan, the successor of Hébert, convoked the civic body, dispatched municipal officers to raise the city and the faubourgs in their name, and caused the tocsin to be rung. Payan speedily assembled a force sufficient to liberate Henriot, Robespierre, and the other ar

rested deputies, and to carry them to the Hôtel de Ville, where about two thousand men were congregated, consisting chiefly of artillerymen, and of insurgents from the suburb of Saint Antoine, who already expressed their resolution of marching against the Convention. But the selfish and cowardly character of Robespierre was unfit for such a crisis. He appeared altogether confounded and overwhelmed with what had passed and was passing around him; and not one of all the victims of the reign of Terror felt its disabling influence so completely as he, the despot who had so long directed its sway. He had not, even though the means must have been in his power, the presence of mind to disperse money in considerable sums, which of itself would not have failed to insure the support of the revolutionary rabble.

Meantime the Convention continued to maintain the bold and commanding front which they had so suddenly and critically assumed. Upon learning the escape of the arrested deputies, and hearing of the insurrection at the Hôtel de Ville, they instantly passed a decree outlawing Robespierre and his associates, inflicting a similar doom upon the Mayor of Paris, the Procureur, and other members of the Commune, and charging twelve of their members, the boldest who could be selected, to proceed with the armed force to

the execution of the sentence. The drums of the National Guards now beat to arms in all the sections under authority of the Convention, while the tocsin continued to summon assistance with its iron voice to Robespierre and the civic magistrates. Every thing appeared to threaten a violent catastrophe, until it was seen clearly that the public voice, and especially amongst the National Guards, was declaring itself generally against the Terrorists.

The Hôtel de Ville was surrounded by about fifteen hundred men, and cannon turned upon the doors. The force of the assailants was weakest in point of number, but their leaders were men of spirit, and night concealed their inferiority of force.

The deputies commissioned for the purpose read the decree of the Assembly to those whom they found assembled in front of the city-hall, and they shrunk from the attempt of defending it, some joining the assailants, others laying down their arms and dispersing. Meantime the deserted group of Terrorists within conducted themselves like scorpions, which, when surrounded by a circle of fire, are said to turn their stings on each other, and on themselves. Mutual and ferocious upbraiding took place among these miserable men. "Wretch, were these the means you promised

to furnish?" said Payan to Henriot, whom he found intoxicated and incapable of resolution or exertion; and, seizing on him as he spoke, he precipitated the revolutionary general from a window. Henriot survived the fall only to drag himself into a drain, in which he was afterwards discovered and brought out to execution. The younger Robespierre threw himself from the window, but had not the good fortune to perish on the spot. It seemed as if even the melancholy fate of suicide, the last refuge of guilt and despair, was denied to men who had so long refused every species of mercy to their fellow-creatures. Lebas alone had calmness enough to dispatch himself with a pistol-shot. Saint Just, after imploring his comrades to kill him, attempted his own life with an irresolute hand, and failed. Couthon lay beneath the table, brandishing a knife, with which he repeatedly wounded his bosom, without daring to add force enough to reach his heart. Their chief, Robespierre, in an unsuccessful attempt to shoot himself, had only inflicted a horrible fracture on his under jaw.

In this situation they were found like wolves in their lair, foul with blood, mutilated, despairing, and yet not able to die. Robespierre lay on a table in an ante-room, his head supported by a deal-box, and his hideous coun-

tenance half-hidden by a bloody and dirty cloth bound round the shattered chin.[1]

The captives were carried in triumph to the Convention, who, without admitting them to the bar, ordered them, as outlaws, for instant execution. As the fatal cars passed to the guillotine, those who filled them, but especially Robespierre, were overwhelmed with execrations from the friends and relatives of victims whom he had sent on the same melancholy road. The nature of his previous wound, from which the cloth had never been removed till the executioner tore it off, added to the torture of the sufferer. The shattered jaw dropped, and the wretch yelled aloud, to the horror of the spectators.[2] A masque taken from that dreadful head was long exhibited in different nations of Europe, and appalled the spectator by its ugliness, and the mixture of fiendish expression with that of bodily agony.

Thus fell Maximilian Robespierre, after having been the first person in the French Republic for nearly two years, during which time he

[1] It did not escape the minute observers of this scene, that he still held in his hand the bag which had contained the fatal pistol, and which was inscribed with the words *Au grand Monarque*, alluding to the sign, doubtless, of the gunsmith who sold the weapon, but singularly applicable to the high pretensions of the purchaser.

[2] The fate of no tyrant in story was so hideous at the conclusion, excepting perhaps that of Jugurtha.

governed it upon the principles of Nero or Caligula. His elevation to the situation which he held involved more contradictions than perhaps attach to any similar event in history. A low-born and low-minded tyrant was permitted to rule with the rod of the most frightful despotism a people, whose anxiety for liberty had shortly before rendered them unable to endure the rule of a humane and lawful sovereign. A dastardly coward arose to the command of one of the bravest nations in the world; and it was under the auspices of a man who dared scarce fire a pistol, that the greatest generals in France began their careers of conquest. He had neither eloquence nor imagination; but substituted in their stead a miserable, affected, bombastic style, which, until other circumstances gave him consequence, drew on him general ridicule. Yet, against so poor an orator, all the eloquence of the philosophical Girondists, all the terrible powers of his associate Danton, employed in a popular assembly, could not enable them to make an effectual resistance. It may seem trifling to mention, that in a nation where a good deal of prepossession is excited by amiable manners and beauty of external appearance, the person who ascended to the highest power was not only ill-looking, but singularly mean in person, awkward and constrained in his address, ignorant how to set about pleasing, even when he

most desired to give pleasure, and as tiresome nearly as he was odious and heartless.

To compensate all these deficiencies, Robespierre had but an insatiable ambition, founded on a vanity which made him think himself capable of filling the highest situation; and therefore gave him daring, when to dare is frequently to achieve. He mixed a false and overstrained, but rather fluent species of bombastic composition, with the grossest flattery to the lowest classes of the people; in consideration of which, they could not but receive as genuine the praises which he always bestowed on himself. His prudent resolution to be satisfied with possessing the essence of power, without seeming to desire its rank and trappings, formed another art of cajoling the multitude. His watchful envy, his long-protracted but sure revenge, his craft, which to vulgar minds supplies the place of wisdom, were his only means of competing with his distinguished antagonists. And it seems to have been a merited punishment of the extravagances and abuses of the French Revolution, that it engaged the country in a state of anarchy which permitted a wretch, such as we have described, to be for a long period master of her destiny. Blood was his element, like that of the other Terrorists, and he never fastened with so much pleasure on a new victim, as when he was at the same time an ancient associate. In an epi-

taph, of which the following couplet may serve as a translation, his life was represented as incompatible with the existence of the human race:—

> Here lies Robespierre—let no tear be shed:
> Reader, if he had lived, thou hadst been dead.'

When the report of Robespierre's crimes was brought to the Convention, in which he is most justly charged with the intention of possessing himself of the government, the inconsistent accusation is added, that he plotted to restore the Bourbons; in support of which it is alleged that a seal, bearing a fleur-de-lis, was found at the Hôtel de Ville. Not even the crimes of Robespierre were thought sufficiently atrocious, without their being mingled with a tendency to Royalism!

With this celebrated demagogue the reign of Terror may be said to have terminated, although those by whose agency the tyrant fell were as much Terrorists as himself, being, indeed, the principal members of the very Committees of Public Safety and Public Security, who had been his colleagues in all the excesses of his revolutionary authority. Among the *Thermidoriens*, as the actors in Robespierre's downfall termed themselves, there were names

' Passant, ne pleure point son sort,
Car, s'il vivait, tu serais mort.

almost as dreadful as that of the Dictator, for whom the ninth Thermidor proved the Ides of March. What could be hoped for from Collot d'Herbois, the butcher of the Lyonnoise—what from Billaud-Varennes—what from Barras, who had directed the executions at Marseilles after its ephemeral revolt—what from Tallien, whose arms were dyed double red, from finger-nails to elbow, in the blood of the unfortunate emigrant gentlemen who were made prisoners at Quiberon? It seemed that only a new set of Septembrisers had succeeded, and that the same horrible principle would continue to be the moving spring of the government, under the direction of other chiefs indeed, but men who were scarce less familiar with its horrors than was the departed tyrant.

Men looked hopelessly towards the Convention, long rather like the corpse of a legislative assembly, actuated, during its apparent activity, like the supposed Vampire, by an infernal spirit not its own, which urged it to go forth and drink blood, but which, deserted by the animating demon, must, it was to be expected, sink to the ground in helpless incapacity. What could be expected from Barrère, the ready panegyrist of Robespierre, the tool who was ever ready to show to the weak and the timid the exact point where their safety recommended to them to join the ranks of the wicked and the strong? But in spite of these discouraging

circumstances, the feelings of humanity, and a spirit of self-protection, dictating a determined resistance to the renovation of the horrid system under which the country had so long suffered, began to show itself both in the Convention and without doors. Encouraged by the fall of Robespierre, complaints poured in against his agents on all sides. Lebon was accused before the Convention by a deputation from Cambray; and as he ascended the Tribune to put himself on his defence, he was generally hailed as the hangman of Robespierre. The monster's impudence supported him in a sort of defence; and when it was objected to him that he had had the common executioner to dine in company with him, he answered, « That delicate people might think that wrong; but Lequinio (another Jacobin proconsul of horrible celebrity) had made the same useful citizen the companion of his leisure and hours of relaxation. » He acknowledged, with the same equanimity, that an aristocrat being condemned to the guillotine, he kept him lying in the usual posture upon his back, with his eyes turned up to the axe, which was suspended above his throat, — in short, in all the agonies which can agitate the human mind, when within a hair's-breadth of the distance of the great separation between Time and Eternity, — until he had read to him, at length, the Gazette which had just arrived, giving an account of a victory

gained by the Republican armies. This monster, with Héron, Rossignol, and other agents of terror more immediately connected with Robespierre, were ordered for arrest, and shortly after for execution. Tallien and Barras would have here paused in the retrospect; but similar accusations now began to pour in from every quarter, and, when once stated, were such as commanded public attention in the most forcible manner. Those who invoked vengeance backed the solicitations of each other—the general voice of mankind was with them; and leaders who had shared the excesses of the Reign of Terror, Thermidoriens as they were, began to see some danger of being themselves buried in the ruins of the power which they had overthrown.

Tallien, who is supposed to have taken the lead in the extremely difficult navigation which lay before the vessel of the state, seems to have experienced a change in his own sentiments, at least his principles of action, inclining him to the cause of humanity. He was also, it is said, urged to so favourable a modification of feelings by his newly-married wife, formerly Madame Fontenai, who, bred a royalist, had herself been a victim to the law of suspicion, and was released from a prison to receive the hand, and influence the activity, of the republican statesman. Barras, who, as commanding the armed force, might be termed the hero of

the 9th Thermidor, was supposed to be also inclined towards humanity and moderation.

Thus disposed to destroy the monstrous system which had taken root in France, and which, indeed, in the increasing impatience of the country, they would have found it impossible to maintain, Tallien and Barras had to struggle, at the same time, to diminish and restrict the general demand for revenge, at a time when, if past tyranny was to be strictly inquired into and punished, the doom, as Carrier himself told them, would have involved every thing in the Convention, excepting perhaps the President's bell and his arm-chair. So powerful were these feelings of resisting a retrospect, that the Thermidoriens declined to support Le Cointre in bringing forward a general charge of inculpation against the two Committees of Public Safety and Public Security, in which accusation, notwithstanding their ultimate quarrel with Robespierre, he showed their intimate connexion with him, and their joint agency in all which had been imputed to him as guilt. But the time was not mature for hazarding such a general accusation, and it was rejected by the Convention with marks of extreme displeasure.

Still, however, the general voice of humanity demanded some farther atonement for two years of outrage, and, to satisfy this demand, the Thermidoriens set themselves to seek victims connected more immediately with Ro-

bespierre; while they endeavoured gradually to form a party, which, setting out upon a principle of amnesty, and oblivion of the past, should in future pay some regard to that preservation of the lives and property of the governed, which, in every other system saving that which had been just overthrown in France, is regarded as the principal end of civil government. With a view to the consolidation of such a party, the restrictions of the press were removed, and men of talent and literature, silenced during the reign of Robespierre, were once more admitted to exercise their natural influence in favour of civil order and religion. Marmontel, La Harpe, and others, who in their youth had been enrolled in the list of Voltaire's disciples, and amongst the infidels of the *Encyclopédie*, now made amends for their youthful errors, by exerting themselves in the cause of good morals, and of a regulated government.

At length followed that general and long-desired measure, which gave liberty to so many thousands, by suspending the law denouncing suspected persons, and emptying at once of their inhabitants the prisons which had hitherto only transmitted them to the guillotine. The tales which these victims of Jacobinism had to repeat, when revealing the secrets of their prison-house, together with the moral influence produced by such a universal gaol-delivery, and the reunion which it effected amongst

friends and relations that had been so long separated, tended greatly to strengthen the hands of the Thermidoriens, who still boasted of that name, and to consolidate a rational and moderate party, both in the capital and provinces. It is, however, by no means to be wondered at, that the liberated sufferers showed a disposition to exercise retribution in a degree which their liberators trembled to indulge, lest it might have recoiled upon themselves. Still both parties united against the remains of the Jacobins.

A singular and melancholy species of force supported these movements towards civilization and order. It was levied among the orphans and youthful friends of those who had fallen under the fatal guillotine, and amounted in number to two or three thousand young men, who acted in concert, were distinguished by black collars, and by their hair being plaited and turned up *à la victime*, as prepared for the guillotine. This costume was adopted in memory of the principle of mourning on which they were associated. These volunteers were not regularly armed or disciplined, but formed a sort of free corps, who opposed themselves readily and effectually to the Jacobins, when they attempted their ordinary revolutionary tactics of exciting partial insurrections, and intimidating the orderly citizens by shouts and violence. Many scuffles took place betwixt the parties, with various success; but ultimately

the spirit and courage of the young Avengers seemed to give them daily a more decided superiority. The Jacobins dared not show themselves, that is, to avouch their principles, either at the places of public amusement, or in the Palais Royal, or the Tuileries, all of which had formerly witnessed their victories. Their assemblies now took place under some appearance of secrecy, and were held in remote streets, and with such marks of diminished audacity as augured that the spirit of the party was crestfallen.

Still, however, the Jacobin party possessed dreadful leaders in Billaud-Varennes and Collot d'Herbois, who repeatedly attempted to awaken its terrific energy. These demagogues had joined, indeed, in the struggle against Robespierre, but it was with the expectation that an Amurath was to succeed an Amurath—a Jacobin a Jacobin—not for the purpose of relaxing the reins of the revolutionary government, far less changing its character. These veteran revolutionists must be considered as separate from those who called themselves Thermidoriens, though they lent their assistance to the revolution on the 9th Thermidor. They viewed as deserters and apostates Legendre, Le Cointre, and others, above all Tallien and Barras, who, in the full height of their career, had paused to take breath, and were now endeavouring to

shape a course so different from that which they had hitherto pursued.

These genuine Sans-culottes endeavoured to rest their own power and popularity upon the same basis as formerly. They re-opened the sittings of the Jacobin Club, shut up on the 9th Thermidor. This ancient revolutionary cavern again heard its roof resound with denunciations, by which Vadier, Billaud-Varennes, and others, devoted to the infernal deities Le Cointre, and those, who, they complained, wished to involve all honest Republicans in the charges brought against Robespierre and his friends. Those threats, however, were no longer rapidly followed by the thunderbolts which used to attend such flashes of Jacobin eloquence. Men's homes were now in comparison safe. A man might be named in a Jacobin Club as an Aristocrat, or a Moderate, and yet live. In fact, the demagogues were more anxious to secure immunity for their past crimes, than at present to incur new censure. The tide of general opinion was flowing strongly against them, and a singular incident increased its power, and rendered it irresistible.

The Parisians had naturally enough imagined, that the provinces could have no instances of jacobinical ruelty and misrule to describe, more tragic and appalling than the numerous executions which the capital had exhibited

every day. But the arrival of eighty prisoners, citizens of Nantes, charged with the usual imputations cast upon suspected persons, undeceived them. These captives had been sent, for the purpose of being tried at Paris before the revolutionary Tribunal. Fortunately, they did not arrive till after Robespierre's fall, and consequently when they were looked upon rather as oppressed persons than as criminals, and were listened to more as accusers of those by whom they were persecuted, than as culprits on their defence.

It was then that the metropolis first heard of horrors which we have formerly barely hinted at. It was then they were told of crowds of citizens, most of whom had been favourable to the republican order of things, and had borne arms against the Vendeans in their attack upon Nantes; men accused upon grounds equally slight, and incapable of proof, having been piled together in dungeons, where the air was pestilential from ordure, from the carcases of the dead, and the infectious diseases of the dying. It was then they heard of Republican baptism and Republican marriages—of men, women, and children sprawling together, like toads and frogs in the season of spring, in the waters of the Loire, too shallow to afford them instant death. It was then they heard of an hundred other abominations—how those uppermost upon the expiring mass prayed to be

thrust into the deeper water, that they might have the means of death—and of much more that humanity forbears to detail; but in regard to which, the sharp, sudden, and sure blow of the Parisian guillotine was clemency.

This tale of horrors could not be endured; and the point of immediate collision between the Thermidoriens, compelled and driven onward by the public voice and feeling, and the remnant of the old Jacobin faction, became the accusation of Carrier, the commissioned deputy under whom these unheard-of horrors had been perpetrated. Vengeance on the head of this wretch was so loudly demanded, that it could not be denied even by those influential persons, who, themselves deeply interested in preventing recrimination, would willingly have drawn a veil over the past. Through the whole impeachment and defence, the Thermidoriens stood on the most delicate and embarrassing ground; for horrid as his actions were, he had in general their own authority to plead for them. For example, a letter was produced with these directions to General Haxo—« It is my plan to carry off from that accursed country all manner of subsistence or provisions for man or beast, all forage—in a word, *every thing* —give all the buildings to the flames, and exterminate the whole inhabitants. Oppose their being relieved by a single grain of corn for their subsistence. I give thee the most posi-

tive, most imperious order. Thou art answerable for the execution from this moment. In a word, leave nothing in that proscribed country—let the means of subsistence, provisions, forage, every thing—absolutely every thing, be removed to Nantes.» The representatives of the French nation heard with horror such a fiendish commission; but with what sense of shame and abasement must they have listened to Carrier's defence, in which he proved he was only literally executing the decrees of the very Convention which was now inquiring into his conduct! A lunatic who, in a lucid moment, hears some one recount the crimes and cruelties he committed in his frenzy, might perhaps enter into their feelings. They were not the less obliged to continue the inquiry, fraught as it was with circumstances so disgraceful to themselves; and Carrier's impeachment and conviction proved the point on which the Thermidoriens, and those who continued to entertain the violent popular opinions, were now at issue.

The atrocious Carrier was taken under the avowed protection of the Jacobin Club, before which audience he made out a case which was heard with applause. He acknowledged his enormities, and pleaded his patriotic zeal; ridiculed the delicacy of those who cared whether an aristocrat died by a single blow, or a protracted death; was encouraged throughout

by acclamations, and received assurances of protection from the remnant of that once formidable association. But their magic influence was dissolved—their best orators had fallen successively by each other's impeachment—and of their most active ruffians, some had been killed or executed, some had fled, or lay concealed, many were in custody, and the rest had become intimidated. Scarce a man who had signalised himself in the French Revolution, but had enjoyed the applause of these demagogues, as versatile in personal attachments, as steady in their execrable principles—scarce one whom they had not been active in sacrificing.

Nevertheless, those members of the Revolutionary Committees, who had so lately lent their aid to dethrone Robespierre, the last idol of the Society, ventured to invoke them in their own defence, and that of their late agents. Billaud-Varennes, addressing the Jacobins, spoke of the Convention as men spared by their clemency during the reign of Robespierre, who now rewarded the Mountain deputies by terming them Men of Blood, and by seeking the death of those worthy patriots, Joseph Lebon and Carrier, who were about to fall under their counter-revolutionary violence. These excellent citizens, he said, were persecuted, merely because their zeal for the Republic had been somewhat ardent—their forms of proceeding a little rash and severe. He invoked the awak-

ing of the Lion—a new revolutionary rising of the people, to tear the limbs and drink the blood —(these were the very words)—of those who had dared to beard them. The meeting dispersed with shouts, and vows to answer to the halloo of their leaders.

But the opposite party had learned that such menaces were to be met otherwise than by merely awaiting the issue, and then trying the force of remonstrances, or the protection of the law, with those to whom the stronger force is the only satisfying reason.

Well organized, and directed by military officers in many instances, large bands of Anti-jacobins, as we may venture to call the volunteer force already mentioned, appeared in the neighbourhood of the suburbs, and kept in check those from whom the Mother Club expected its strongest aid; while the main body of the young Avengers marched down upon the citadel of the enemy, and invested the Jacobin Club itself in the midst of its sitting. These demagogues made but a wretched defence when attacked by that species of popular violence, which they had always considered as their own especial weapon; and the facility with which they were dispersed amid ridicule and ignominy, served to show how easily, on former occasions, the mutual understanding and spirited exertion of well-disposed men could have at any time prevented criminal vio-

lence from obtaining the mastery. Had La Fayette marched against and shut up the Jacobin Club, the world would have been spared many horrors, and in all probability he would have found the task as easy as it proved to those bands of incensed young men. - It must be mentioned, though the recital is almost unworthy of history, that the female Jacobins came to rally and assist their male associates, and that several of them were seized upon and punished in a manner, which might excellently suit their merits, but which shows that the young associates for maintaining order were not sufficiently aristocratic to be under the absolute restraints imposed by the rules of chivalry. It is impossible, however, to grudge the flagellation administered upon this memorable occasion.

When the Jacobins had thus fallen in the popular contest, they could expect little success in the Convention; and the less, that the impulse of general feeling seemed about to recal into that Assembly, by the reversal of their outlawry, the remnant of the unhappy Girondists, and other members, who had been arbitrarily proscribed on the 31st of May. The measure was delayed for some time, as tending to effect a change in the composition of the House, which the ruling party might find inconvenient. At length upwards of sixty deputies were first declared free of the outlawry,

and finally readmitted into the bosom of the Convention, with heads which had been so long worn in insecurity, that it had greatly cooled their love of political theory.

In the mean time the government, through means of a revolutionary tribunal, acting however with much more of legal formality and caution than that of Robespierre, made a sacrifice to the public desire of vengeance. Lebon, Carrier, already mentioned, Fouquier, the public accuser under Robespierre, and one or two others of the same class, selected on account of the peculiar infamy and cruelty of their conduct, were condemned and executed as an atonement for injured humanity.

Here probably the Thermidoriens would have wished the reaction to stop; but this was impossible. Barras and Tallien perceived plainly, that with whatever caution and clemency they might proceed towards their old allies of the Mountain, there was still no hope of any thing like reconciliation; and that their best policy was to get rid of them as speedily and as quietly as they could. The Mountain, like a hydra whose heads bourgeoned, according to the poetic expression, as fast as they were cut off, continued to hiss at and menace the government with unwearied malignity, and to agitate the metropolis by their intrigues, which were the more easily conducted that the winter was severe, bread had become scarce and

high-priced, and the common people of course angry and discontented. Scarcity is always the grievance of which the lower classes must be most sensible; and when it is remembered that Robespierre, though at the expense of the grossest injustice to the rest of the kingdom, always kept bread beneath a certain *maximum* or fixed price in the metropolis, it will not be wondered at that the population of Paris should be willing to favour those who followed his maxims. The impulse of these feelings, joined to the machinations of the Jacobins, showed itself in many disorders.

At length the Convention, pressed by shame on the one side and fear on the other, saw the necessity of some active measure, and appointed a commission to consider and report upon the conduct of the four most obnoxious Jacobin chiefs, Collot d'Herbois, Billaud-Varennes, Vadier, and Barrère. The report was of course unfavourable; yet upon the case being considered, the Convention were satisfied to condemn them to transportation to Cayenne. Some resistance was offered to this sentence, so mild in proportion to what those who underwent it had been in the habit of inflicting; but it was borne down, and the sentence was carried into execution. Collot d'Herbois, the demolisher and depopulator of Lyons, is said to have died in the common hospital, in consequence of drinking

off at once a whole bottle of ardent spirits. Billaud-Varennes spent his time in teaching the innocent parrots of Guiana the frightful jargon of the Revolutionary Committee; and finally perished in misery.

These men both belonged to that class of atheists, who, looking up towards heaven, loudly and literally defied the Deity to make his existence known by launching his thunderbolts. Miracles are not wrought on the challenge of a blasphemer more than on the demand of a sceptic; but both these unhappy men had probably before their death reason to confess, that in abandoning the wicked to their own free will, a greater penalty results even in this life, than if Providence had been pleased to inflict the immediate doom which they had impiously defied.

The notice of one more desperate attempt at popular insurrection finishes, in a great measure, the history of Jacobinism and of the Mountain; of those, in short, who professed the most outrageous popular doctrines, considered as a political body. They continued to receive great facilities from the increasing dearth, and to find ready opportunities of agitating the discontented part of a population, disgusted by the diminution not only of comforts, but of the very means of subsistence. The Jacobins, therefore, were easily able to excite an insurrection of the

same description as those which had repeatedly influenced the fate of the Revolution, and which, in fact, proceeded to greater extremities than any which had preceded it in the same desperate game. The rallying word of the rabble was « Bread, and the Democratic Constitution of 1793; » a constitution which the Jacobins had projected, but never attempted seriously to put into force. No insurrection had yet appeared more formidable in numbers, or better provided in pikes, muskets, and cannon. They invested the Convention,[1] without experiencing any effectual opposition; burst into the hall, assassinated one deputy, Ferraud, by a pistol-shot, and paraded his head amongst his trembling brethren, and through the neighbouring streets and environs on a pike. They presented Boissy d'Anglas, the President, with the motions which they demanded should be passed; but were defeated by the firmness with which he preferred his duty to his life.

The steadiness of the Convention gave at length confidence to the friends of good order without. The National Guards began to muster strong, and the insurgents to lose spirits. They were at length, notwithstanding their formidable appearance, dispersed with very little effort. The tumult, however,

[1] 20th May, 1795.

was renewed on the two following days; until at length the necessity of taking sufficient measures to end it at once and for ever, became evident to all.

Pichegru, the conqueror of Holland, who chanced to be in Paris at the time, was placed at the head of the National Guards and the volunteers, whose character we have noticed elsewhere. At the head of this force, he marched in military order towards the Faubourg Saint Antoine, which had poured forth repeatedly the bands of armed insurgents that were the principal force of the Jacobins.

After a show of defending themselves, the inhabitants of this disorderly suburb were at length obliged to surrender up their ar msof every kind. Those pikes, which had so often decided the destinies of France, were now delivered up by cart-loads; and the holy right of insurrection was rendered in future a more dangerous and difficult task.

Encouraged by the success of this decisive measure, the government proceeded against some of the Terrorists whom they had hitherto spared, but whose fate was now determined, in order to strike dismay into their party. Six Jacobins, accounted among the most ferocious of the class, were arrested as encouragers of the late insurrection, and delivered up to be tried by a military commission. They were all deputies of the Mountain gang.

Certain of their doom, they adopted a desperate resolution. Among the whole party, they possessed but one knife, but they resolved it should serve them all for the purpose of suicide. The instant their sentence was pronounced, one stabbed himself with this weapon; another snatched the knife from his companion's dying hand, plunged it in his own bosom, and handed it to the third, who imitated the dreadful example. Such was the consternation of the attendants, that no one arrested the fatal progress of the weapon—all fell either dead or desperately wounded—the last were dispatched by the guillotine.

After this decisive victory, and last dreadful catastrophe, Jacobinism, considered as a pure and unmixed party, can scarce be said to have again raised its head in France, although its leaven has gone to qualify and characterize, in some degree, more than one of the different parties which have succeeded them. As a political sect, the Jacobins can be compared to none that ever existed, for none but themselves ever thought of an organized, regular, and continued system of murdering and plundering the rich, that they might debauch the poor by the distribution of their spoils. They bear, however, some resemblance to the frantic followers of John of Leyden and Knipperdoling, who occupied Munster in the seventeenth century, and committed, in the

name of Religion, the same frantic horrors which the French Jacobins did in that of Freedom. In both cases, the courses adopted by these parties were most foreign to, and inconsistent with, the alleged motives of their conduct. The Anabaptists practised every species of vice and cruelty, by the dictates, they said, of inspiration—the Jacobins imprisoned three hundred thousand of their countrymen in name of liberty, and put to death more than half the number, under the sanction of fraternity.

Now at length, however, society began to resume its ordinary course, and the business and pleasures of life succeeded each other as usual. But even social pleasures brought with them strange and gloomy associations with that Valley of the Shadow of Death, through which the late pilgrimage of France appeared to have lain. An assembly for dancing, very much frequented by the young of both sexes, and highly fashionable, was called the « Ball of the Victims.» The qualification for attendance was the having lost some near and valued relation or friend in the late reign of Terror. The hair and head-dress were so arranged as to resemble the preparations made for the guillotine, and the motto adopted was, « We dance amidst tombs.» In no country but France could the incidents have taken place which gave rise to this association; and certainly in

no country but France would they have been used for such a purpose.

But it is time to turn from the consideration of the internal government of France, to its external relations; in regard to which the destinies of the country rose to such a distinguished height, that it is hardly possible to reconcile the two pictures of a nation, triumphant at every point against all Europe coalesced against her, making efforts and obtaining victories, to which history had been yet a stranger; while at the same time her affairs at home were directed by ferocious blood-thirsty savages, such as Robespierre. The republic, regarded in her foreign and domestic relations, might be fancifully compared to the tomb erected over some hero, presenting, without, trophies of arms and the emblems of victory, while, within, there lies only a mangled and corrupted corpse.

## CHAPTER X.

Retrospective View of the External Relations of France—Her great Military Successes—Whence they arose.—Effect of the Compulsory Levies.—Military Genius and Character of the French.—French Generals.—New Mode of training the Troops.—Light Troops.—Successive Attacks in Column.—Attachment of the Soldiers to the Revolution —Also of the Generals.—Carnot.—Effect of the French Principles preached to the Countries invaded by their Arms.—Close of the Revolution with the fall of Robespierre.—Reflections upon what was to succeed.

It may be said of victory, as the English satirist has said of wealth, that it cannot be of much importance in the eye of Heaven, considering in what unworthy association it is sometimes found. While the rulers of France were disowning the very existence of a Deity, her armies appeared to move almost as if protected by the especial favour of Providence. Our former recapitulation presented a slight sketch of the perilous state of France in 1792, surrounded by foes on almost every frontier, and with difficulty maintaining her ground on any

point; yet the lapse of two years found her victorious, nay, triumphantly victorious on all.

On the north-eastern frontier, the English, after a series of hard fighting, had lost not only Flanders, on which we left them advancing, but Holland itself, and had been finally driven with great loss to abandon the Continent. The King of Prussia had set out on his first campaign as the chief hero of the coalition, and had undertaken that the Duke of Brunswick, his general, should put down the revolution in France as easily as he had done that of Holland. But finding the enterprise which he had undertaken was above his strength; that his accumulated treasures were exhausted in an unsuccessful war; and that Austria, not Prussia, was regarded as the head of the coalition, he drew off his forces, after they had been weakened by more than one defeat, and made a separate peace with France, in which he renounced to the new Republic the sovereignty of all those portions of the Prussian territory which lay on the east side of the Rhine. The king, to make up for these losses, sought a more profitable, though less honourable field of warfare, and concurred with Russia and Austria in effecting by conquest a final partition and appropriation of Poland, on the same unprincipled plan on which the first had been conducted.

Spain, victorious at the beginning of the

contest, had been of late so unsuccessful in opposing the French armies, that it was the opinion of many that her character for valour and patriotism was lost for ever. Catalonia was overrun by the Republicans, Rosas taken, and no army intervening betwixt the victors and Madrid, the King of Spain was obliged to clasp hands with the murderers of his kinsman, Louis XVI., acknowledge the French Republic, and withdraw from the coalition.

Austria had well sustained her ancient renown, both by the valour of her troops, the resolution of her cabinet, and the talents of one or two of her generals,—the Archduke Charles in particular, and the veteran Wurmser. Yet she too had succumbed under the Republican superiority. Belgium, as the French called Flanders, was, as already stated, totally lost; and war along the Rhine was continued by Austria, more for defence than with a hope of conquest.

So much and so generally had the fortune of war declared in favour of France upon all points, even while she was herself sustaining the worst of evils from the worst of tyrannies. There must have been unquestionably several reasons for such success as seemed to attend universally on the arms of the Republic, instead of being limited to one peculiarly efficient army, or to one distinguished general.

The first and most powerful cause must be

looked for in the extraordinary energy of the Republican government, which, from its very commencement, threw all subordinate considerations aside, and devoted the whole resources of the country to its military defence. It was then that France fully learned the import of the word « Requisition,» as meaning that which government needs, and which must at all hazards be supplied. Compulsory levies were universally resorted to; and the undoubted right which a state has to call upon each of its subjects to arise in defence of the community, was extended into the power of sending them upon expeditions of foreign conquest.

In the month of March, 1793, a levy of two hundred thousand men was appointed, and took place: but by a subsequent decree of the 21st August in the same year, a more gigantic mode of recruiting was resorted to.

Every man in France able to bear arms was placed at the orders of the state, and being divided into classes, the youngest, to the amount of five hundred thousand, afterwards augmented to a million, were commanded to march for immediate action. The rest of society were to be so disposed of as might best second the efforts of the actual combatants. The married men were to prepare arms and forward convoys,—the women to make uniforms,—the children to scrape lint,—and the old men to preach Republicanism. All pro-

perty was in like manner devoted to maintaining the war—all buildings were put to military purposes—all arms appropriated to the public service—and all horses, excepting those which might be necessary for agriculture, seized on for the cavalry, and other military services. Representatives of the people were named to march with the various levies,—those terrible commissioners, who punished no fault with a slighter penalty than death. No excuse was sustained for want of personal compliance with the requisition for personal service—no delay permitted—no substitution allowed—actual and literal compliance was demanded from every one, and of what rank soever. Conscripts who failed to appear, resisted, or fled, were subjected to the penalties which attached to emigration.

By successive decrees of this peremptory nature, enforced with the full energy of revolutionary violence, the government succeeded in bringing into the field, and maintaining, forces to an amount more than double those of their powerful enemies; and the same means of supply—arbitrary requisition, namely—which brought them out, supported and maintained them during the campaign; so that, while there remained food and clothing of any kind in the country, the soldier was sure to be fed, paid, and equipped.

There are countries, however, in which the

great numerical superiority thus attained is of little consequence, when a confused levy *en masse* of raw, inexperienced, and disorderly boys, are opposed against the ranks of a much smaller, but a regular and well-disciplined army, such as in every respect is that of Austria. On such occasions the taunting speech of Alaric recurs to recollection,—« The thicker the hay the more easily it is mowed.» But this was not found to be the case with the youth of France, who adopted the habits most necessary for a soldier with singular facility and readiness. Military service has been popular amongst them in all ages; and the stories of the grandsire in a French cottage have always tended to excite in his descendants ideas familiar with a military condition. They do not come to it as a violent change of life, which they had never previously contemplated, and where all is new and terrible; but as to a duty which every Frenchman is liable to discharge, and which is as natural to him as to his father or grandfather before him.

Besides this propensity, and undoubtedly connected with it, a young Frenchman is possessed of the natural character most desirable in the soldier. He is accustomed to fare hard, to take much exercise, to make many shifts, and to support with patience occasional deprivations. His happy gaiety renders him indifferent to danger, his good-humour patient un-

der hardship. His ingenuity seems to amuse as well as to assist him in the contingencies of a roving life. He can be with ease a cook or an artificer, or what else the occasion may require. His talents for actual war are not less decided. Either in advancing with spirit, or in retreating with order, the Frenchman is one of the finest soldiers in the world; and when requisite, the privates in their army often exhibit a degree of intelligence and knowledge of the profession, which might become individuals of a higher rank in other services. If not absolute water-drinkers, they are less addicted to intoxication than the English soldier, who, perhaps, only brings, to counterbalance the numerous advantages on the part of his opponent, that mastiff-like perseverance and determination in combat, which induces him to repeat, maintain, and prolong his efforts, under every disadvantage of numbers and circumstances.

The spirits of the Frenchman, such as we have described, did not suffer much from the violent summons which tore him from his home. We have, unhappily, in our own navy, an example, how little men's courage is broken by their being forced into a dangerous service. But, comfortless as the state of France then was, and painful as the sights must have been by which the eyes were daily oppressed—closed up too as were the avenues to every

civil walk of life, and cheap as they were held in a nation which had become all one vast camp, a youth of spirit was glad to escape from witnessing the desolation at home, and to take with gaiety the chance of death or promotion, in the only line which might now be accounted comparatively safe, and indubitably honourable. The armies with whom these new levies were incorporated were by degrees admirably supplied with officers. The breaking down the old distinctions of ranks had opened a free career to those desirous of promotion; and in times of hard fighting, men of merit are distinguished and get preferment. The voice of the soldier had often its influence upon the officer's preferment; and that is a vote seldom bestowed, but from ocular proof that it is deserved. The revolutionary rulers, though bloody in their resentment, were liberal, almost extravagant, in their rewards, and spared neither gold nor steel, honours nor denunciations, to incite their generals to victory, or warn them against the consequences of defeat.

Under that stern rule which knew no excuse for ill success, and stimulated by opportunities which seemed to offer every prize to honourable ambition, arose a race of generals whom the world scarce ever saw equalled, and of whom there certainly never at any other period flourished so many, in the same service. Such was Buonaparte himself; such were Pichegru

and Moreau, doomed to suffer a gloomy fate under his ascendancy. Such were those marshals and generals who were to share his better fortunes, and cluster around his future throne, as the Paladins around that of Charlemagne, or as the British and Armorican champions begirt the Round Table of Uther's fabled son. In those early wars, and summoned out by the stern conscription, were trained Murat, whose eminence and fall seemed a corollary to that of his brother-in-law—Ney, the bravest of the brave—the calm, sagacious Macdonald—Joubert, who had almost anticipated the part reserved for Buonaparte—Masséna, the spoiled Child of Fortune—Augereau, Berthier, Lannes, and many others, whose names began already to stir the French soldier as with the sound of a trumpet.

These adventurers in the race of fame belonged some of them, as Macdonald, to the old military school; some, like Moreau, came from the civil class of society; many arose from origins that were positively mean, and were therefore still more decidedly children of the Revolution. But that great earthquake, by throwing down distinctions of birth and rank, had removed obstacles which would otherwise have impeded the progress of almost all these distinguished men; and they were therefore, for the greater part, attached to

that new order of affairs which afforded full scope to their talents.

The French armies, thus recruited, and thus commanded, were disciplined in a manner suitable to the materials of which they were composed. There was neither leisure nor opportunity to subject the new levies to all that minuteness of training, which was required by the somewhat pedantic formality of the old school of war. Dumourier, setting the example, began to show that the principle of revolution might be introduced with advantage into the art of war itself; and that the difference betwixt these new conscripts and the veteran troops to whom they were opposed, might be much diminished by resorting to the original and more simple rules of stratégie, and neglecting many formalities which had been once considered as essential to playing the great game of war with success. It is the constant error of ordinary minds to consider matters of mere routine as equally important with those which are essential, and to entertain as much horror at a disordered uniform as at a confused manœuvre. It was to the honour of the French generals, as men of genius, that in the hour of danger they were able to surmount all the prejudices of a profession which has its pedantry as well as others, and to suit the discipline which they

retained, to the character of their recruits and the urgency of the time.

The foppery of the manual exercise was laid aside, and it was restricted to the few motions necessary for effectual use of the musket and bayonet. Easier and more simple manœuvres were substituted for such as were involved and difficult to execute; and providing the line or column could be formed with activity, and that order was preserved on the march, the mere etiquette of military movements was much relaxed. The quantity of light troops was increased greatly beyond the number which had of late been used by European nations. The Austrians, who used to draw from the Tyrol, and from their wild Croatian frontier, the best light troops in the world, had at this time formed many of them into regiments of the line, and thus limited and diminished their own superiority in a species of force which was becoming of greater importance daily. The French, on the contrary, disciplined immense bodies of their conscripts as irregulars and sharp-shooters. Their numbers and galling fire frequently prevented their more systematic and formal adversaries from being able to push forward reconnoitring parties, by which to obtain any exact information as to the numbers and disposition of the French; while the Republican troops of the line, protected by this swarm of wasps, chose their

time, place, and manner, of advancing to the attack, or retreating, as the case demanded. It is true, that this service cost an immense number of lives; but the French generals were sensible that human life was the commodity which the Republic set the least value upon; and that when Death was served with so wide a feast from one end of France to the other, he was not to be stinted in his own proper banqueting-hall, the field of battle.

The same circumstances dictated another variety or innovation in French tactics, which greatly increased the extent of slaughter. The armies with whom they engaged, disconcerted by the great superiority of numbers which were opposed to them, and baffled in obtaining intelligence by the teazing activity of the French light troops, most frequently assumed the defensive, and taking a strong position, improved perhaps by field-works, waited until the fiery youth of France should come to throw themselves by thousands upon their batteries. It was then that the French generals began first to employ those successive attacks in column, in which one brigade of troops is brought up after another, without interruption, and without regard to the loss of lives, until the arms of the defenders are weary with slaying, and their line being in some point or other carried, through the impossibility of everywhere resisting an assault so continued and desperate, the battle is lost,

and the army is compelled to give way; while the conquerors can, by the multitudes they have brought into action, afford to pay the dreadful price which they have given for the victory.

In this manner the French generals employed whole columns of the young conscripts, termed, from that circumstance, « food for the cannon » (*chair à canon*), before disease had deprived them of bodily activity, or experience had taught them the dangers of the profession on which they entered with the thoughtless vivacity of schoolboys. It also frequently happened, even when the French possessed no numerical superiority upon the whole, that by the celerity of their movements, and the skill with which they at once combined and executed them, they were able suddenly to concentrate such a superiority upon the point which they meant to attack, as insured them the same advantage.

In enumerating the causes of the general success of the Republican arms, we must not forget the moral motive—the interest which the troops took in the cause of the war. The army, in fact, derived an instant and most flattering advantage from the Revolution, which could scarce be said of any other class of men in France, excepting the peasant. Their pay was improved, their importance increased. There was not a private soldier against whom the highest ranks of the profession were shut,

and many attained to them. Masséna was originally a drummer, Ney a common hussar, and there were many others who arose to the command of armies from the lowest condition. Now this was a government for a soldier to live and flourish under, and seemed still more advantageous when contrasted with the old monarchical system, in which the prejudices of birth interfered at every turn with the pretensions of merit, where a *roturier* could not rise above a subaltern rank, and where all offices of distinction were, as matters of inheritance, reserved for the grande noblesse alone.

But besides the rewards which it held out to its soldiers, the service of the Republic had this irresistible charm for the soldiery—it was victorious. The conquests which they obtained, and the plunder which attended those conquests, attached the victors to their standards, and drew around them fresh hosts of their countrymen. « *Vive la Republique!* » became a war-cry, as dear to their army as in former times the shout of Montjoie St Denis, and the Tricoloured flag supplied the place of the Oriflamme. By the confusion, the oppression, the bloodshed of the Revolution, the soldiers, were but little affected. They heard of friends imprisoned or guillotined, indeed;[1] but a mili-

[1] Such was the fate of Moreau, who, on the eve of one of his most distinguished victories, had to receive the [illegible]t his father had been beheaded.

tary man, like a monk, leaves the concerns of the civil world behind him, and while he plays the bloody game for his own life or death with the enemy who faces him, has little time to think of what is happening in the native country which he has abandoned. For any other acquaintance with the politics of the Republic, they were indebted to flowery speeches in the Convention, resounding with the praises of the troops, and to harangues of the representatives accompanying the armies, who never failed by flattery and largesses to retain possession of the affection of the soldiers, whose attachment was so essential to their safety. So well did they accomplish this, that while the Republic flourished, the armies were so much attached to that order of things, as to desert successively some of their most favourite leaders, when they became objects of suspicion to the fierce democracy.

The generals, indeed, had frequent and practical experience, that the Republic could be as severe with her military as with her civil subjects, and even more so, judging by the ruthlessness with which they were arrested and executed, with scarce the shadow of a pretext. Yet this did not diminish the zeal of the survivors. If the revolutionary government beheaded, they also paid, promised, and promoted; and amid the various risks of a soldier's life, the hazard of the guillotine was only

a slight addition to those of the sword and the musket,[1] which, in the sanguine eye of courage and ambition, joined to each individual's confidence in his own good luck, did not seem to render his chance much worse. When such punishment arrived, the generals submitted to it as one of the casualties of war; nor was the Republic worse or more reluctantly served by those who were left.

Such being the admirable quality and talents, the mode of thinking and acting, which the Republican, or rather Revolutionary, armies possessed, it required only the ruling genius of the celebrated Carnot, who, bred in the department of engineers, was probably one of the very best tacticians in the world, to bring them into effectual use. He was a member of the frightful Committee of Public Safety; but it has been said in his defence,

[1] The risk was considered as a matter of course. Madame La Roche-Jacquelin informs us that General Quétineau, a Republican officer who had behaved with great humanity in La Vendée, having fallen into the hands of the insurgents, was pressed by Lescure, who commanded them, not to return to Paris. « I know the difference of our political opinions, » said the Royalist; « but why should you deliver up your life to those men with whom want or success will be a sufficient reason for abridging it? »—« You say truly, » replied Quétineau; « but as a man of honour, I must present myself in defence of my conduct wherever it may be impeached. » He went, and perished by the guillotine accordingly.

that he did not meddle with its atrocities, limiting himself entirely to the war department, for which he showed so much talent, that his colleagues left it to his exclusive management. In his own individual person he constituted the whole *bureau militaire*, or war-office, of the Committee of Public Safety, corresponded with and directed the movements of the armies, as if inspired by the Goddess of Victory herself. He first daringly claimed for France her natural boundaries (that is, the boundaries most convenient for her). The Rhine, the Alps, and the Pyrenees, he assigned as the limits of her dominions; and asserted that all within these, belonging to other powers, must have been usurpations on France, and were unhesitatingly to be resumed as such. And he conquered by his genius the countries which his ambition claimed. Belgium became an integral part of the French Republic—Holland was erected into a little dependent democracy, as an outwork for defending the Great Nation—the Austrians were foiled on the Rhine—the King of Sardinia driven from Savoy—and schemes realized which Louis XIV. never dared to dream of. In return for the complaisance exhibited by the Committee towards himself, he did not express any scruples, if he entertained such, concerning the mode in which they governed the interior of their unhappy country. Yet, notwithstanding his skill and

his caution, the blighting eye of Robespierre was fixed on him, as that of the snake which watches its victims. He could not dispense with the talents of Carnot in the career of victory; but it is well known, that if his plans on any occasion had miscarried, the security of his head would have become very precarious.

It must also be allowed, that although the French armies were attached to the Republic, and moved usually under direction of a member of the Committee of Public Security, they did not adopt, in their brutal extent, the orders for exterminating warfare which were transmitted to them by their masters. At one time a decree was passed, refusing quarter to such of the allied troops as might be made prisoners; but the French soldiers could not be prevailed on to take a step which must have aggravated so dreadfully the necessary horrors of war. When we consider how the civil government of France were employed, when the soldiers refused their sanction to this decree, it seems as if Humanity had fled from cities and the peaceful dwellings of men, to seek a home in camps and combats.

One important part of the subject can be here treated but slightly. We allude to the great advantages derived by the French arms from the reception of their political doctrines at this period among the people whom they invaded. They proclaimed aloud that they

made war on castles and palaces, but were at peace with cottages; and as on some occasions besieging generals are said to have bribed the governor of a place to surrender it, by promising they would leave in his unchallenged possession the military chest of the garrison, so the French in all cases held out to the populace the plunder of their own nobles, as an inducement for them to favour, at least not to oppose, the invasion of their country. Thus their armies were always preceded by their principles. A party favourable to France, and listening with delight to the doctrines of liberty and equality, was formed in the bosom of each neighbouring state, so that the power of the invaded nation was crushed, and its spirit quenched, under a sense of internal discontent and discord. The French were often received at once as conquerors and deliverers by the countries they invaded; and in almost all cases, the governments on which they made war were obliged to trust exclusively to such regular forces as they could bring into the field, being deprived of the inappreciable advantage of general zeal among their subjects in their behalf. It was not long ere the inhabitants of those deceived countries found that the fruits of the misnamed tree of Liberty resembled those said to grow by the Dead Sea —fair and goodly to the eye, but to the taste all filth and bitterness.

We are now to close our review of the French Revolution, the fall of Robespierre being the era at which its terrors began to ebb and recede, nor did they ever again arise to the same height. If we look back at the whole progress of the change, from the convocation of the States-general to the 9th Thermidor, as the era of that man's overthrow was called, the eye in vain seeks for any point at which even a probability existed of establishing a solid or permanent government. The three successive constitutions of 1791, 1793, and 1794, the successive work of Constitutionalists, Girondists, and Jacobins, possessed no more power to limit or arrest the force of the revolutionary impulse, than a bramble or briar to stop the progress of a rock rushing down from a precipice. Though ratified and sworn to, with every circumstance which could add solemnity to the obligation, each remained, in succession, a dead letter. France, in 1794 and 1795, was therefore a nation without either a regular constitution, or a regular administration; governed by the remnant of an Assembly called a Convention, who continued sitting, merely because the crisis found them in possession of their seats, and who administered the government through the medium of Provisional Committees, with whose dictates they complied implicitly, and who really di-

rected all things, though in the Convention's name.

In the mean time, and since those strange scenes had commenced, France had lost her King and Nobles, her Church and Clergy, her Judges, Courts, and Magistrates, her Colonies and Commerce. The greater part of her statesmen and men of note had perished by proscription, and her orators' eloquence had been cut short by the guillotine. She had no finances—the bonds of civil society seem to have retained their influence from habit only. The nation possessed only one powerful engine, which France called her own, and one impulsive power to guide it—These were her army and her ambition. She resembled a person in the delirium of a fever, who has stripped himself in his frenzy of all decent and necessary clothing, and retains in his hand only a bloody sword; while those who have endeavoured to check his fury, lie subdued around him. Never had so many great events successively taken place in a nation, without affording something like a fixed or determined result, either already attained, or soon to be expected.

Again and again did reflecting men say to each other,—This unheard-of state of things, in which all seems to be temporary and revolutionary, will not, cannot last;—and especially

after the fall of Robespierre, it seemed that some change was approaching. Those who had achieved that work did not hold on any terms of security the temporary power which it had procured them. They rather retained their influence by means of the jealousy of two extreme parties, than from any confidence reposed in themselves. Those who had suffered so deeply under the rule of the revolutionary government must have looked with suspicion on the Thermidoriens, as regular Jacobins, who had shared all the excesses of the period of Terror, and now employed their power in protecting the perpetrators. On the other hand, those of the Revolutionists who yet continued in the bond of Jacobin fraternity, could not forgive Tallien and Barras the silencing the Jacobin Clubs, the exiling Collot d'Herbois and Billaud-Varennes, putting to death many other patriots, and totally crushing the system of revolutionary government. In fact, if the thoroughbred Revolutionists still endured the domination of Tallien and Barras, it was only because it shielded them from the reaction, or retributive measures threatened by the moderate party. Matters, it was thought, could not remain in this uncertain state, nor was the present temporary pageant of government likely to linger long on the scene. But by whom was that scene next to be opened? Would a late returning to ancient opinions in-

duce a people, who had suffered so much through innovation, to recal either absolutely, or upon conditions, the banished race of her ancient princes? Or would a new band of Revolutionists be permitted by Heaven, in its continued vengeance, to rush upon the stage? Would the supreme power become the prize of some soldier as daring as Cæsar, or some intriguing statesman as artful as Octavius? Would France succumb beneath a Cromwell or a Monk, or again be ruled by a Cabal of hackneyed statesmen, or an Institute of Theoretical Philosophy, or an anarchical Club of Jacobins? These were reflections which occupied almost all bosoms. But the hand of Fate was on the curtain, and about to bring the scene to light.

END OF VOL. II.